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Francis John Lambert

G. A. POYNDER
SECOND-HAND BOOKSHOP,

THE

MODERN

BRITISH DRAMA.

VOLUME FOURTH.

[redacted]

THE

Modern

BRITISH DRAMA.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOLUME FOURTH.

COMEDIES.

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VOLUME FOURTH.

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THE

BRITISH DRAMA.

THE

HYPOCRITE.

ALTERED BY BICKERSTAFF

FROM

CIBBER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Sir JOHN LAMBERT.
Doctor CANTWELL.
Colonel LAMBERT.
DARNLEY.
SEYWARD.
MAW-WORM.

WOMEN.

Old Lady LAMBERT.
Young Lady LAMBERT.
CHARLOTTE.
BETTY.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Hall in Sir* JOHN LAMBERT'S *House. Sir* JOHN LAMBERT *enters, followed by Colonel* LAMBERT.

Col. Lamb. PRAY consider, sir.

Sir J. Lamb. So I do, sir, that I am her father, and will dispose of her as I please.

Col. Lamb. I do not dispute your authority, sir; but as I am your son too, I think it my duty to be concerned for your honour. Have not you countenanced his addresses to my sister? Has not she received them?—Mr Darnley's birth and fortune are well known to you; and, I dare swear, he may defy the world to lay a blemish on his character.

Sir J. Lamb. Why then, sir, since I am to be catechised, I must tell you, I do not like his character; he is a world-server, a libertine, and has no more religion than you have.

Col. Lamb. Sir, we neither of us think it proper to make a boast of our religion; but, if you will please to enquire, you will find that we go to church as orderly as the rest of our neighbours.

Sir J. Lamb. Oh! you go to church! you go to church!—Wonderful! wonderful! to bow, and grin, and cough, and sleep: a fine act of devotion indeed.

Col. Lamb. Well, but, dear sir——

Sir J. Lamb. Colonel, you are an atheist.

Col. Lamb. Pardon me, sir, I am none: it is a character I abhor; and, next to that, I abhor the character of an enthusiast.

Sir J. Lamb. Oh, you do so; an enthusiast!—this is the fashionable phrase, the bye-word, the nick-name, that our pleasure-loving generation give to those few who have a sense of true sanctity.

Col. Lamb. Say canting, sir.

Sir J. Lamb. I tell you what, son, as I have told you more than once, you will draw some heavy judgment on your head one day or other.

Col. Lamb. So says the charitable Dr Cantwell: you have taken him into your house, and, in return, he gives over half your family to the devil.

Sir J. Lamb. Do not abuse the doctor, colonel; it is not the way to my favour. I know you cannot bear him, because he is not one of your mincing preachers.—He holds up the glass to your enormities, shows you to yourselves in your genuine colours.

Col. Lamb. I always respect piety and virtue, sir; but there are pretenders to religion, as well as to courage; and as we never find the truly brave to be such as make much noise about their valour, so, I apprehend, the truly good seldom or never deal much in grimace.—To be candid, sir, I make a distinction between hypocrisy and devotion, and can never pay the same regard to the mask, that I would to the face.

Sir J. Lamb. Very well, sir; this is very well.

Col. Lamb. Besides, sir, I would be glad to know by what authority the doctor pretends to exercise the clerical function. It does not appear clearly to me that he ever was in orders.

Sir J. Lamb. That is no business of yours, sir—But I am better informed.——However, he has the call of zeal.

Col. Lamb. Zeal!

Sir J. Lamb. Why, colonel, you are in a passion.

Col. Lamb. I own I cannot see with temper, sir, so many religious mountebanks impose upon the unwary multitude; wretches, who make a trade of religion, and shew an uncommon concern for the next world, only to raise their fortunes with greater security in this.

Sir J. Lamb. Colonel, let me hear no more: I see you are too hardened to be converted now; but since you think it your duty as a son to be concerned for my errors, I think it as much mine, as a father, to be concerned for yours. If you think fit to amend them, so; if not, take the consequence.

Col. Lamb. Well, sir, may I ask you without offence, if the reasons you have given me are your only reasons for discountenancing Mr Darnley's addresses to my sister?

Sir J. Lamb. Are they not flagrant? Would you have me marry my daughter to a pagan?

Col. Lamb. He intends this morning paying his respects to you, in hopes to obtain your final consent; and desired me to be present as a mediator of articles between you.

Sir J. Lamb. I am glad to hear it.

Col. Lamb. That's kind indeed, sir.

Sir J. Lamb. May be not, sir; for I will not be at home when he comes; and because I will not tell a lie for the matter, I will go out this moment.

Col. Lamb. Nay, dear sir——

Sir J. Lamb. And, do you hear—because I will not deceive him either, tell him I would not have him lose his time in fooling after your sister—In short, I have another man in my head for her.

[*Exit.*

Col. Lamb. Another man! It would be worth one's while to know him: pray Heaven this canting hypocrite has not got some beggarly rascal in his eye for her. I must rid the house of him at any rate, or all the settlement I can hope for from my father is a castle in the air.——My sister may be ruined too.—Here she comes. If there be another man in the case, she, no doubt, can let me into the secret.

Enter CHARLOTTE.

Sister, good morrow; I want to speak with you.

Char. Pr'ythee then, dear brother, don't put on that wise politic face, as if your regiment was going to be disbanded, or sent to the West-Indies, and you obliged to follow it.

Col. Lamb. Come, come, a truce with your raillery; what I have to ask of you is serious, and I beg you would be so in your answer.

Charl. Well then, provided it is not upon the subject of love, I will be so—but make haste too—for I have not had my tea yet.

Col. Lamb. Why, it is, and it is not, upon that subject.

Charl. Oh, I love a riddle dearly——Come—let's hear it.

Col. Lamb. Nay, psha! if you will be serious, say so.

Charl. O lard, sir; I beg your pardon—there—there's my whole form and features totally disengaged, and lifeless, at your service; now, put them in what posture of attention you think fit. [*Leaning against him awkwardly.*

Col. Lamb. Was there ever such a giddy devil!——Pr'ythee stand up. I have been talking with my father, and he declares positively you shall not receive any further addresses from Mr Darnley.

Charl. Are you serious?

Col. Lamb. He said so this minute, and with some warmth.

Charl. I am glad on't with all my heart.

Col. Lamb. How! glad!

Charl. To a degree. Do you think a man has any more charms for me for my father's liking him? No, sir; if Mr Darnley can make his way to me now, he is obliged to me, and to me only. Besides, now it may have the face of an amour indeed, now one has something to struggle for; there's difficulty, there's danger, there's the dear spirit of contradiction in it too—Oh! I like it mightily.

Col. Lamb. I am glad this does not make you

think the worse of Darnley,—but a father's consent might have clapt a pair of horses more to your coach perhaps, and the want of it may pinch your fortune.

Charl. Burn fortune! am not I a fine woman? and have not I twenty thousand pounds in my own hands?

Col. Lamb. Yes, sister, but with all your charms, you have had them in your hands almost these four years.

Charl. Psha! and have not I had the full swing of my own airs and humours these four years? but if I humour my father, I warrant he'll make it three or four thousand more, with some unlick'd lout—A comfortable equivalent, truly!—No, no; let him light his pipe with his consent, if he please. Wilful against wise for a wager.

Col. Lamb. Well said; nothing goes to your heart, I find.

Charl. No, no; if I must have an ill match, I'll have the pleasure of playing my own game at least.

Col. Lamb. But pray, sister, has my father ever proposed any other man to you?

Charl. Another man! let me know why you ask, and I'll tell you.

Col. Lamb. Why, the last words he said to me were, that he had another man in his head for you.

Charl. And who is it? who is it? tell me, dear brother!

Col. Lamb. Why, you don't so much as seem surprised.

Charl. No; but I'm impatient, and that's as well.

Col. Lamb. Why, how now, sister?

Charl. Why, sure, brother, you know very little of female happiness, if you suppose the surprise of a new lover ought to shock a woman of my temper—don't you know that I am a coquette?

Col. Lamb. If you are, you are the first that ever was sincere enough to own her being so.

Charl. To a lover, I grant you: but not to you; I make no more of you than a sister; I can say any thing to you.

Col. Lamb. I should have been better pleased if you had not owned it to me—it's a hateful character.

Charl. Ay, it's no matter for that; it's violently pleasant, and there's no law against it that I know of.

Col. Lamb. Darnley's like to have a hopeful time with you.

Charl. Well; but don't you really know who it is my father intends me?

Col. Lamb. Not I, really; but I imagined you might, and therefore thought to advise with you about it.

Charl. Nay, he has not opened his lips to me yet—are you sure he's gone out?

Col. Lamb. You are very impatient to know, methinks; what have you to do to concern yourself about any man but Darnley?

Charl. O lud! O lud! Pr'ythee, brother, don't be so wise; if you had an empty house to let, would you be displeased to hear there were two people about it? Besides, to be a little serious, Darnley has a tincture of jealousy in his temper, which nothing but a substantial rival can cure.

Col. Lamb. Oh, your servant, madam! now you talk reason. I am glad you are concerned enough for Darnley's faults, to think them worth your mending—ha, ha!

Charl. Concern'd! why, did I say that?—look you, I'll deny it all to him—well, if ever I am serious with him again——

Col. Lamb. Here he comes; be as merry with him as you please.

Charl. Psha!

Enter DARNLEY.——CHARLOTTE *takes a Book, and reads.*

Darn. My dear colonel, your servant.

Col. Lamb. I am glad you did not come sooner; for in the humour my father left me, 'twould not have been a proper time for you to have pressed your affair——I touch'd upon't—but—I'll tell you more presently; in the mean time, lose no ground with my sister.

Darn. I shall always think myself obliged to your friendship, let my success be what it will—Madam, your most obedient—what have you got there, pray?

Charl. [*Reading.*] *Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose;*
Quick as her eyes, and as unfix'd as those—

Darn. Pray, madam, what is it?

Charl. *Favours to none, to all she smiles extends—*

Darn. Nay, I will see.

Charl. *Oft she rejects, but never once offends.*

Col. Lamb. Have a care: she has dipt into her own character, and she'll never forgive you if you don't let her go through with it.

Darn. I beg your pardon, madam.

Charl. *Bright as the sun her eyes the gazer strike,*
And like the sun they shine on all alike—
um—um—

Darn. That is something like, indeed.

Col. Lamb. You would say so, if you knew all.

Darn. All what! pray what do you mean?

Col. Lamb. Have a little patience: I'll tell you immediately.

Charl. *If to her share some female errors fall,*
Look on her face—and you'll forget them all.

Is not that natural, Mr Darnley?

Darn. For a woman to expect, it is indeed.

Charl. And can you blame her, when 'tis at the same time a proof of the poor man's passion, and her power?

Darn. So that you think the greatest compliment a lover can make his mistress, is to give up h reason to her.

Charl. Certainly; for what have your lordly sex to boast of but your understanding, and till that's entirely surrendered to her discretion, whilst the

least sentiment holds out against her, a woman must be downright vain to think her conquest completed.

Darn. There we differ, madam; for in my opinion, nothing but the most excessive vanity could value or desire such a conquest.

Charl. Oh, d'ye hear him, brother! the creature reasons with me; nay, has the effrontery to think me in the wrong too! O lud! he'd make an horrid tyrant—positively I won't have him.

Darn. Well; my comfort is, no other man will easily know whether you'll have him or not.

Charl. Am I not an horrid vain, silly creature, Mr Darnley?

Darn. A little bordering upon the baby, I must own.

Charl. Laud! how can you love a body so then? but I don't think you love me tho'—do you?

Darn. Yes, faith, I do; and so shamefully, that I'm in hopes you doubt it.

Charl. Poor man! he'd fain bring me to reason.

Darn. I would indeed.—Nay, were it but possible to make you serious only when you should be so, I should think you the most amiable——

Charl. O lud! he's civil——

Darn. Come, come, you have good sense; use me but with that, and make me what you please.

Charl. Laud! I don't desire to make any thing of you, not I.

Darn. Don't look so cold upon me; by Heaven, I can't bear it.

Charl. Well, now you are tolerable.

Darn. Come then, be generous, and swear at least you'll never marry another.

Charl. Ah, laud! now you have spoiled all again:—besides, how can I be sure of that, before I have seen this other man my brother spoke to me of?

Darn. What riddle's this!

Col. Lamb. I told you, you did not know all. To be serious, my father went out but now on purpose to avoid you.—In short, he absolutely retracts his promises; says, he would not have you fool away your time after my sister; and, in plain terms told me, he had another man in his head for her.

Darn. Another man! who? what is he? did not he name him?

Col. Lamb. No; nor has he yet spoke of him to my sister.

Darn. This is unaccountable!—what can have given him this sudden turn?

Col. Lamb. Some whim our conscientious doctor has put in his head, I'll lay my life.

Darn. He! he can't be such a villain; he professes a friendship for me.

Col. Lamb. So much the worse.

Darn. But on what pretence, what grounds, what reason? what interest can he have to oppose me?

Col. Lamb. Are you really now as unconcerned as you seem to be?

Charl. You are a strange dunce, brother—you know no more of love than I do of a regiment—You shall see now how I'll comfort him—Poor Darnley, ha, ha, ha!

Darn. I don't wonder at your good humour, madam, when you have so substantial an opportunity to make me uneasy for life.

Charl. O lud! how sententious he is! well, his reproaches have that greatness of soul—the confusion they give is insupportable.—Betty!—is the tea ready?

Enter BETTY.

Betty. Yes, madam.

Charl. Mr Darnley, your servant. [*Exit.*

[BETTY *follows.*

Col. Lamb. So, you have made a fine piece of work on't indeed!

Darn. Dear Tom, pardon me if I speak a little freely; I own the levity of her behaviour, at this time, gives me harder thoughts than I once believed it possible to have of her.

Col. Lamb. Indeed, my friend, you mistake her.

Darn. Nay, nay; had she any real concern for me, the apprehensions of a man's addresses, whom yet she never saw, must have alarmed her to some degree of seriousness.

Col. Lamb. Not at all; for let this man be whom he will, I take her levity as a proof of her resolution to have nothing to say to him.

Darn. And pray, sir, may I not as well suspect, that this artful delay of her good nature to me now, is meant as a provisional defence against my reproaches, in case, when she has seen this man, she should think it convenient to prefer him?

Col. Lamb. No, no; she's giddy, but not capable of so studied a falsehood.

Darn. But still, what could she mean by going away so abruptly?

Col. Lamb. You grew too grave for her.

Darn. Why, who could bear such trifling?

Col. Lamb. You should have laughed at her.

Darn. I can't love at that easy rate.

Col. Lamb. No—if you could, the uneasiness would lie on her side.

Darn. Do you then really think she has any thing in her heart for me?

Col. Lamb. Ay, marry, sir—Ah! if you could but get her to own that seriously now——Lord, how you could love her!

Darn. And so I could, by heaven.

Col. Lamb. Well, well; I'll undertake for her; if my father don't stand in the way, we are well enough.

Darn. What says my lady? you don't think she's against us?

Col. Lamb. I dare say she is not. She's of so soft, so sweet a disposition——

Darn. Pr'ythee, how came so fine a woman to marry your father, with such a vast inequality of years?

Col. Lamb. Want of fortune, Frank: She was poor and beautiful—he rich and amorous—she made him happy, and he her——

Darn. A lady——

Col. Lamb. And a jointure—now she's the only one in the family, that has power with our precise doctor; and, I dare engage, she'll use it with him to persuade my father from any thing that is against your interest. By the way, you must know I have some shrewd suspicion, that this sanctified rogue is in love with her.

Darn. In love!

Col. Lamb. You shall judge by the symptoms—but hush!—here he comes with my grandmother—step this way, and I'll tell you. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Doctor CANTWELL *and old Lady* LAMBERT, *followed by* SEYWARD.

Dr Cant. Charles, step up into my study; bring down a dozen more of those manuals of devotion, with the last hymns I composed; and, when he calls, give them to Mr Maw-worm; and, do you hear, if any one enquires for me, say I am gone to Newgate, and the Marshalsea, to distribute alms. [*Exit* SEYWARD.

Old Lady Lamb. Well; but, worthy doctor, why will you go to the prisons yourself? cannot you send the money?—Ugly distempers are often catched there—have a care of your health—let us keep one good man, at least, amongst us.

Dr Cant. Alas, madam, I am not a good man: I am a guilty, wicked sinner, full of iniquity; the greatest villain that ever breathed; every instant of my life is clouded with stains; it is one continued series of crimes and defilements; you do not know what I am capable of; you indeed take me for a good man; but the truth is, I am a worthless creature.

Old Lady Lamb. Have you then stumbled? Alas, if it be so, who shall walk upright? What horrid crime have you been hurried into, that calls for this severe self-recrimination?

Dr Cant. None, madam, that perhaps humanity may call very enormous; yet am I sure, that my thoughts never stray a moment from celestial contemplations? do they not sometimes, before I am aware, turn to things of this earth? am I not often hasty, and surprised into wrath? nay, the instance is recent; for, last night, being snarled at, and bit by Minxy, your daughter-in-law's lap-dog, I am conscious I struck the little beast with a degree of passion, for which I have never been able to forgive myself since.

Old Lady Lamb. Oh, worthy, humble soul! this is a slight offence, which your suffering and mortifications may well atone for.

Dr Cant. No, madam, no; I want to suffer; I ought to be mortified; and I am obliged now to tell you, that, for my soul's sake, I must quit your good son's family; I am pamper'd too much here, live too much at my ease.

Old Lady Lamb. Good doctor!

Dr Cant. Alas, madam! It is not you that should shed tears; it is I ought to weep; you are a pure woman.

Old Lady Lamb. I pure? who, I?—no, no; sinful, sinful!———But do not talk of quitting our family; what will become of us!—for friendship——for charity———

Dr Cant. Enough; say no more, madam, I submit: while I can do good, it is my duty.

Enter Colonel LAMBERT *and* DARNLEY.

Col. Lamb. Your ladyship's most humble servant.

Old Lady Lamb. Grandson, how do you?

Darn. Good day to you, doctor.

Dr Cant. Mr Darnley, I am your most humble servant: I hope you and the good colonel will stay, and join in the private duties of the family.

Old Lady Lamb. No, doctor, no; it is too early; the sun has not risen upon them, but I doubt not, the day will come.

Dr Cant. I warrant they would go to a play now.

Old Lady Lamb. Would they?——I am afraid they would.

Darn. Why, I hope it is no sin, madam; if I am not mistaken, I have seen your ladyship at a play.

Old Lady Lamb. Me, sir!—see me at a play! You may have seen the prince of darkness, or some of his imps, in my likeness, perhaps——

Darn. Well, but madam——

Old Lady Lamb. Mr Darnley, do you think I would commit a murder!

Dr Cant. No, sir, no; these are not the plants usually to be met with in that rank soil; the seeds of wickedness indeed sprout up every where too fast; but a playhouse is the devil's hot-bed.

Col. Lamb. And, yet, doctor, I have known some of the leaders of your tribe, as scrupulous as they are, who have been willing to gather fruit there for the use of the brethren——as in case of a benefit——

Dr Cant. The charity covereth the sin; and it may be lawful to turn the wages of abomination to the comfort of the righteous.

Col. Lamb. Ha, ha, ha!

Dr Cant. Reprobate, reprobate!

Col. Lamb. What is that you mutter, sirrah?

Old Lady Lamb. Oh, Heavens!

Darn. Let him go, colonel.

Col. Lamb. A canting hypocrite!

Dr Cant. Very well, sir: your father shall know my treatment. [*Exit.*

Old Lady Lamb. Let me run out of the house; I shall have it fall upon my head, if I stay among such wicked wretches. Oh, grandson, grandson! [*Exit.*

Darn. Was there ever so insolent a rascal?

Col. Lamb. The dog will one day provoke me to beat his brains out.

Darn. But what the devil is he?—whence comes he?—what is his original?—how has he so ingratiated himself with your father, as to get footing in the house?

Col. Lamb. Oh, sir, he is here in quality of chaplain; he was first introduced by the good old lady that's just gone out. You know she has

been a long time a frequenter of our modern conventicles, where, it seems, she got acquainted with this sanctified pastor. His disciples believe him a saint, and my poor father, who has been for some time tainted with their pernicious principles, has been led into the same snare.

Darn. Ha! here's your sister again.

Enter CHARLOTTE *and Doctor* CANTWELL.

Charl. You'll find, sir, I will not be used thus; nor shall your credit with my father protect your insolence to me.

Col Lamb. What's the matter?

Char. Nothing; pray be quiet—I don't want you—stand out of the way—how durst you bolt with such authority into my chamber, without giving me notice?

Darn. Confusion!

Col. Lamb. Hold—if my father won't resent this, 'tis then time enough for me to do it.

Dr. Cant. Compose yourself, madam; I came by your father's desire, who being informed that you were entertaining Mr Darnley, grew impatient, and gave his positive commands that you attend him instantly, or he himself, he says, will fetch you.

Darn. Ay, now the storm is rising.

Dr. Cant. So, for what I have done, madam, I had his authority, and shall leave him to answer you.

Charl. 'Tis false. He gave you no authority to insult me; or, if he had, did you suppose I would bear it from you? What is it you presume upon? Your function? Does that exempt you from the manners of a gentleman?

Dr. Cant. Shall I have an answer to your father, lady?

Charl. I'll send him none by you.

Dr. Cant. I shall inform him so. [*Exit.*

Charl. A saucy puppy!

Col. Lamb. Pray, sister, what has the fellow done to you?

Charl. Nothing.

Darn. I beg you would tell us, madam.

Charl. Nay, no great matter—but I was sitting carelessly in my dressing room—a—a fastening my garter, with my face just towards the door; and this impudent cur, without the least notice, comes bounce in upon me—and my devilish hoop happening to hitch in the chair, I was an hour before I could get down my petticoats.

Darn. The rogue must be corrected.

Col. Lamb. Yet, 'egad, I cannot help laughing at the accident; what a ridiculous figure must she make—ha, ha, ha!

Charl. Hah! you're as impudent as he, I think.

Darn. Now, dear Tom, speak to her before she goes.

Charl. What does he say, brother?

Col. Lamb. Why, he wants to have me speak to you, and I would have him do it himself.

Charl. Ay, come do, Darnley; I am in a good humour now.

Darn. Oh, Charlotte, my heart is bursting—

Charl. Well, well, out with it then.

Darn. Your father now, I see, is bent on parting us——nay, what's worse, perhaps, will give you to another—I cannot speak—imagine what I want from you——

Charl. Well——O lud! one looks so silly though when one is serious—O gad!——In short, I cannot get it out.

Col. Lamb. I warrant you; try again.

Charl. O lud—well—if one must be teased, then—why he must hope, I think.

Darn. Is it possible?——thus——

Col. Lamb. Buz——not a syllable: she has done very well. I bar all heroics; if you press it too far, I'll hold six to four she's off again in a moment.

Darn. I'm silenced.

Charl. Now am I on tiptoe to know what odd fellow my father has found out for me.

Darn. I'd give something to know him.

Charl. He's in a terrible fuss at your being here, I find.

Col. Lamb. 'Sdeath! here he comes.

Charl. Now we are all in a fine pickle.

Sir JOHN LAMBERT *enters hastily; and, looking sternly at* DARNLEY, *takes* CHARLOTTE *under his arm, and carries her off.*

Col. Lamb. So———well said, doctor. 'Tis he, I am sure, has blown this fire: what horrid hands is our poor family fallen into! and how the rogue seems to triumph in his power!——How little is my father like himself! By nature open, just, and generous; but this vile hypocrite drives his weak passions like the wind; and I foresee, at last, something fatal will be the consequence.

Darn. Not if, by speedily detecting him, you take care to prevent it.

Col. Lamb. Why, I have a thought that might expose him to my father; and, in some unguarded hour, we may yet, perhaps, surprise this lurking thief without his holy vizor. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

An Ante-Chamber in Sir JOHN LAMBERT'S *House.* SEYWARD, *with a Writing in his Hand.*

Sey. 'Tis so——I have long suspected where his zeal would end; in the making of his private fortune.—But then, to found it on the ruin of his patron's children!—I shudder at the villainy. What desperation may a son be driven to, so barbarously disinherited!—Besides, his daughter, fair Charlotte, too, is wronged; wronged in the tenderest point: for so extravagant is this settlement, that it leaves her not a shilling, unless she marries with the doctor's consent, which is intended, by what I have heard, as an expedient to oblige her to marry the doctor himself.——Now, 'twere but an honest part to let Charlotte know the snare that's laid for her. This deed's not signed and may be yet prevented. It shall be so. —Yes, charming creature—I adore you.——And, though I am sensible my passion is without hope, I may indulge it thus far, at least; I may have the merit of serving you, and perhaps the pleasure to know you think yourself obliged by me.

Enter Sir JOHN, *Lady* LAMBERT, *and* CHARLOTTE.

Sir J. Lamb. Oh, Seyward, your uncle wants you, to transcribe some hymns.

Seyw. Sir, I'll wait on him. [*Exit.*

Charl. A pretty well-bred fellow that.

Sir J. Lamb. Ay, ay: but he has better qualities than his good breeding.

Charl. He's always clean, too.

Sir J. Lamb. I wonder, daughter, when you will take notice of a man's real merit. Humph!—well bred and clean, forsooth! Would not one think now she was describing a cox- comb? When do you hear my wife talk at this rate? and yet she is as young as your fantastical ladyship.

Lady Lamb. Charlotte is of a cheerful temper, my dear; but I know you don't think she wants discretion.

Sir J. Lamb. I shall try that presently; and you, my dear, shall judge between us. In short, daughter, your course of life is but one continual round of playing the fool to no purpose; and therefore I am resolved to make you think seriously, and marry.

Char. That I shall do before I marry, sir, you may depend upon it.

Sir J. Lamb. Um——That I am not so sure of; but you may depend upon my having thought seriously, and that's as well; for the person I intend you, is, of all the world, the only man who can make you truly happy.

Char. And of all the world, sir, that's the only man I'll positively marry.

Lady Lamb. You have rare courage, Charlotte; if I had such a game to play, I should be frighted out of my wits.

Char. Lord, madam, he'll make nothing of it, depend upon it.

Sir J. Lamb. Mind what I say to you. This wonderful man, I say, first, in his public character, is religious, zealous, and charitable.

Char. Very well, sir.

Sir J. Lamb. In his private character, sober.

Char. I should hate a sot.

Sir J. Lamb. Chaste.

Char. A hem! [*Stifling a laugh.*

Sir J. Lamb. What is it you sneer at, madam? ——You want one of your fine gentlemen rakes, I suppose, that are snapping at every woman they meet with?

Char. No, no, sir; I am very well satisfied—— I—I should not care for such a sort of a man, no more than I should for one that every woman was ready to snap at.

Sir J. Lamb. No; you'll be secure from jealousy; he has experience, ripeness of years—— he is almost forty-nine. Your sex's vanity will have no charms for him.

Char. But all this while, sir, I don't find that he has charms for our sex's vanity. How does he look? Is he tall, well made? Does he dress, sing, talk, laugh, and dance well? Has he good hair, good teeth, fine eyes? Does he keep a chaise, coach, and vis-a-vis? Has he six prancing ponies? Does he wear the Prince's uniform, and subscribe to Brookes's?

Sir J. Lamb. Was there ever so profligate a creature! What will this age come to!

Lady Lamb. Nay, Charlotte, here I must be against you. Now you are blind indeed. A woman's happiness has little to do with the pleasure her husband takes in his own person.

Sir J. Lamb. Right.

Lady Lamb. It is not how he looks, but how he loves, is the point.

Sir J. Lamb. Good again.

Lady Lamb. And a wife is much more secure that has charms for her husband, than when the husband has only charms for her.

Sir J. Lamb. Admirable! Go on, my dear.

Lady Lamb. Do you think a woman of five-and-twenty may not be much happier with an honest man of fifty, than the finest woman of fifty with a young fellow of five-and-twenty?

Sir J. Lamb. Mark that.

Char. Ay, but when two five-and-twenties come together!—dear papa, you must allow they have a chance to be fifty times as pleasant and frolicksome.

Sir J. Lamb. Frolicksome! Why, you sensual idiot, what have frolics to do with solid happiness? I am ashamed of you—Go, you talk worse than

a girl at a boarding-school—Frolicksome! as if marriage was only a licence for two people to play the fool according to law. Methinks, madam, you have a better example of happiness before your face. Here's one has ten times your understanding, and she, you find, has made a different choice.

Char. Lord, sir, how you talk! you don't consider people's tempers. I don't say my lady is not in the right; but then, you know, papa, she's a prude, and I am a coquette; she becomes her character very well, I don't deny it; and I hope you see every thing I do is as consistent with mine.——Your wise people may talk what they will, but 'tis constitution governs us all: and be assured, you will no more be able to bring me to endure a man of forty-nine, than you can persuade my lady to dance in church to the organ.

Sir J. Lamb. Why, you wicked wretch, could any thing persuade you to do that?

Char. Lord, sir, I won't answer for what I might do, if the whim was in my head; besides, you know I always loved a little flirtation.

Sir J. Lamb. O horrible!—flirtation!——My poor sister has ruined her: leaving her fortune in her own hand has turned her brain. In short, Charlotte, your sentiments of life are shameful, and I am resolved upon your instant reformation; therefore, as an earnest of your obedience, I shall first insist that you never see young Darnley more; for, in one word, the good and pious doctor Cantwell's the man that I have decreed for your husband.

Char. Ho, ho, ho!

Sir J. Lamb. 'Tis very well; this laugh you think becomes you, but I shall spoil your mirth—no more—give me a serious answer.

Char. I ask your pardon, sir: I should not have smiled indeed, could I have supposed it possible that you were serious.

Sir J. Lamb. You'll find me so.

Char. I'm sorry for it; but I have an objection to the doctor, sir, that most fathers think a substantial one

Sir J. Lamb. Name it.

Char. Why, sir, we know nothing of his fortune; he's not worth a groat.

Sir J. Lamb. That's more than you know, madam; I am able to give him a better estate than I am afraid you'll deserve.

Char. How! sir!

Sir J. Lamb. I have told you what's my will, and shall leave you to think on't.

Enter SEYWARD.

Seyw. Sir, if you are at leisure, the doctor desires to speak with you upon business of importance.

Sir J. Lamb. Where is he?

Seyw. In his own chamber, sir.

Sir J. Lamb. I will come to him immediately. —[*Exit* SEYW.]—Daughter, I am called away, and therefore have only time to tell you, as my last resolution, doctor Cantwell is your husband, or I'm no more your father. [*Exit.*

Char. O madam! I am at my wit's end; not for the little fortune I may lose in disobeying my father, but it startles me to find what a dangerous influence this fellow has over all his actions.

Lady Lamb. Here's your brother.

Enter Colonel LAMBERT.

Col. Lamb. Madam, your most obedient.—Well, sister, is the secret out? Who is this pretty fellow my father has picked up for you?

Charl. Even our agreeable doctor.

Col. Lamb. You are not serious?

Lady Lamb. He's the very man, I can assure you, sir.

Col. Lamb. Confusion! what, would the cormorant devour the whole family? Your ladyship knows he is secretly in love with you too.

Lady Lamb. Fy, fy, colonel.

Col. Lamb. I ask your pardon, madam, if I speak too freely; but I am sure, by what I have seen, your ladyship must suspect something of it.

Lady Lamb. I am sorry any body else has seen it; but I must own his behaviour to me of late, both in private and before company, has been something warmer than I thought became him.

Col. Lamb. How are these opposites to be reconciled? Can the rascal have the assurance to think both points are to be carried?

Charl. Truly, one would not suspect the gentleman to be so termagant.

Col. Lamb. Especially while he pretends to be so shocked at all indecent amours. In the country he used to make the maids lock up the turkey cocks every Saturday night, for fear they should gallant the hens on a Sunday.

Lady Lamb. Oh! ridiculous!

Col. Lamb. Upon my life, madam, my sister told me so.

Charl. I tell you so, you impudent——

Lady Lamb. Fy, Charlotte; he only jests with you.

Charl. How can you be such a monster to stay playing the fool here, when you have more reason to be frighted out of your wits! You don't know, perhaps, that my father declares he'll settle a fortune upon this fellow too.

Col. Lamb. What do you mean?

Lady Lamb. 'Tis too true; 'tis not three minutes since he said so.

Col. Lamb. Nay, then, it is time indeed his eyes were opened; and give me leave to say, madam, 'tis only in your power.

Lady Lamb. What is't you propose?

Col. Lamb. Why, if this fellow, which I'm sure of, is really in love with you, give him a fair opportunity to declare himself, and leave me to make my advantage of it.

Lady Lamb. I should be loth to do a wrong thing.

Charl. Dear madam, it is the only way in the world to expose him to my father.

Lady Lamb. I'll think of it.

Col. Lamb. Pray do, madam; but in the mean time I must leave you—poor Darnley stays for me at the Smyrna, and will sit upon thorns till I bring him an account of his new rival.

Charl. Well, well, get you gone then; here is my grandmother, and, after the affront you offered this morning to the doctor, she will not be able to bear the sight of you. [*Exit Col.*

Enter Old Lady LAMBERT.

Lady Lamb. This is kind, madam; I hope your ladyship's come to dine with us.

Old Lady Lamb. Oh, don't be afraid! only in my way from Tottenham Court, I just called to see whether any dreadful accident happened to the family since I was here last.

Lady Lamb. Accident, did your ladyship say?

Old Lady Lamb. I shall be sorry, daughter, but not surprised, when I hear it; for there are goings on under this roof that will bring temporal punishments along with them.

Lady Lamb. Indeed, madam, you astonish me!

Old Lady Lamb. We'll drop the subject; and I beg leave to address myself to you, Miss Charlotte: I see you have a bit of lace upon your neck; I desire to know what you wear it for.

Charl. Wear it for, madam! it's the fashion.

Old Lady Lamb. In short, I have been at my linen-draper's to-day, and have brought you some thick muslin, which I desire you will make handkerchiefs of—for I must tell you that slight covering is indecent, and gives much offence.

Lady Lamb. Indecent, did your ladyship say?

Old Lady Lamb. Yes, daughter-in-law. Doctor Cantwell complains to me that he cannot sit at table, the sight of her bare neck disturbs him so; and he's a good man, and knows what indecency is.

Charl. Yes, indeed; I believe he does, better than any one in this house. But you may tell the doctor from me, madam, that he is an impudent coxcomb, a puppy, and deserves to have his bones broke.

Old Lady Lamb. Fy, Charlotte, fy! He speaks but for your good, and this is the grateful return you make.

Charl. Grateful return, madam!—how can you be so partial to that hypocrite?—The doctor is one of those who start at a feather.—Poor good man! yet he has his vices of the graver sort——

Old Lady Lamb. Come, come; I wish you would follow his precepts, whose practice is conformable to what he teaches ——Virtuous man! —Above all sensual regards, he considers the world merely as a collection of dirt and pebble-stones.—How has he weaned me from temporal connections! My heart is now set upon nothing sublunary; and, I thank Heaven, I am so insensible to every thing in this vain world, that I could see you, my son, my daughters, my brothers, my grandchildren, all expire before me; and mind it no more than the going out of so many snuffs of candle.

Charl. Upon my word, madam, it is a very humane disposition you have been able to arrive at, and your family is much obliged to the doctor for his instructions.

Old Lady Lamb. Well, child, I have nothing more to say to you at present; Heaven mend you, that's all.

Lady Lamb. But pray, madam, stay and dine with us.

Old Lady Lamb. No, daughter; I have said it, and you know I never tell a lie; but here's my son, if you'll give me leave, I'll stay and speak to him.

Lady Lamb. Your ladyship's time's your own.

Charl. Ay, and here's that abominable doctor. —This fellow puts me beyond my patience.

[*Exeunt Lady* LAMBERT *and* CHARLOTTE.

Enter Sir JOHN LAMBERT *and Doctor* CANTWELL.

Sir J. Lamb. Oh, madam, madam! I'm glad you're here to join me in solicitations to the doctor.—Here is my mother, friend, my mother; a pious woman; you will hear her; more worthy to advise you than I am.

Dr Cant. Alas! the dear good lady, I will kiss her hand!—but what advice can she give me? The riches of this world, sir, have no charms for me; I am not dazzled with their false glare; and was I, I repeat it, to accept of the trust you want to repose in me, Heaven knows, it would only be lest the means should fall into wicked hands, who would not lay it out as I should do, for the glory of heaven, and the good of my neighbour.

Old Lady Lamb. What is the matter, son?

Dr Cant. Nothing, madam, nothing.——But you were witness how the worthy colonel treated me this morning—Not that I speak it on my own account—for to be reviled is my portion.

Sir J. Lamb. O the villain! the villain!

Dr Cant. Indeed, I did not think he had so hard a nature.

Old Lady Lamb. Ah! your charitable heart knows not the rancour that is in his.—His wicked sister too has been here this moment abusing this good man.

Dr Cant. O sir, 'tis plain, 'tis plain; your whole family are in a combination against me—your son and daughter hate me; they think I stand between them and your favour; and indeed it is not fit I should do so; for, fallen as they are, they are still your children, and I am an alien, an intruder, who ought in conscience to retire and heal those unhappy breaches.

Old Lady Lamb. See, if the good man does not wipe his eyes!

Dr Cant. Oh, Heavens! the thought of their ingratitude wounds me to the quick——but I'll remove this eye-sore—here, Charles!

Enter SEYWARD.

Sir J. Lamb. For goodness sake——

Dr Cant. Bring me that writing I gave you to lay up this morning.

Sir J. Lamb. Make haste, good Charles; it shall be signed this moment. [*Exit* SEYWARD.

Dr Cant. Not for the world, Sir John—every minute tends to corroborate my last intentions—I must not, will not take it, with the curses of your children.

Sir J. Lamb. But, consider, doctor—shall my wicked son then be heir to my lands, before repentance has entitled him to favour?——No, let him depend upon you, whom he has wronged; perhaps, in time he may reflect upon his father's justice, and be reconciled to your rewarded virtues.—If Heaven should at last reclaim him, in you, I know, he still would find a fond forgiving father.

Dr Cant. The imagination of so blest an hour softens me to a tenderness I cannot support!

Old Lady Lamb. Oh! the dear good man!

Sir J. Lamb. With regard to my daughter, doctor, you know she is not wronged by it: because, if she proves not obstinate, she may still be happy.

Old Lady Lamb. Yes, but the perverse wretch slights the blessing you propose for her.

Dr Cant. We must allow, madam, female modesty a time, which often takes the likeness of distaste: the commands of your good son might too suddenly surprise her—Maids must be gently dealt with—and might I humbly advise——

Sir J. Lamb. Any thing you will; you shall govern me and her.

Dr Cant. Then, sir, abate of your authority, and let the matter rest a while.

Sir J. Lamb. Suppose we were to get my wife to speak to her? women will often hear from their own sex what, sometimes, even from the man they like, will startle them.

Dr Cant. Then, with your permission, sir, I will take an opportunity of talking to my lady.

Sir J. Lamb. She's now in her dressing room; I'll go and prepare her for it. [*Exit.*

Dr Cant. You are too good to me, sir—too bountiful.

Enter SEYWARD.

Seyw. Sir, Mr Maw-worm is without, and would be glad to be permitted to speak with you.

Old Lady Lamb. Oh, pray, doctor, admit him; I have not seen Mr Maw-worm this great while; he's a pious man, tho' in a humble estate; desire the worthy creature to walk in.

Enter MAW-WORM.

—How do you do, Mr Maw-worm?

Maw. Thank your ladyship's axing—I'm but deadly poorish, indeed; the world and I can't agree—I have got the books, doctor——and Mrs Grunt bid me give her service to you, and thanks you for the eighteen-pence.

Dr Cant. Hush, friend Maw-worm! not a word more; you know I hate to have my little charities blaz'd about:—a poor widow, madam, to whom I sent my mite.

Old Lady Lamb. Give her this.

[*Offers a purse to* MAW-WORM.

Dr Cant. I'll take care it shall be given up to her. [*Puts it up.*

Old Lady Lamb. But what is the matter with you, Mr Maw-worm?

Maw. I don't know what's the matter with me—I'm a breaking my heart——I think its a sin to keep a shop.

Old Lady Lamb. Why, if you think it a sin, indeed—pray what's your business?

Maw. We deals in grocery, tea, small beer, charcoal, butter, brick-dust, and the like.

Old Lady Lamb. Well; you must consult with your friendly director here.

Maw. I wants to go a preaching.

Old Lady Lamb. Do you?

Maw. I'm almost sure I have had a call.

Old Lady Lamb. Ay!

Maw. I have made several sermons already; I does them extrumpery, because I cann't write; and now the devils in our alley says, as how my head's turned.

Old Lady Lamb. Ay, devils indeed——but don't you mind them.

Maw. No, I don't—I rebukes them, and preaches to them whether they will or not. We lets our house in lodgings to single men; and sometimes I gets them together, with one or two of the neighbours, and makes them all cry.

Old Lady Lamb. Did you ever preach in public?

Maw. I got up on Kennington Common the last review day, but the boys threw brick-bats at me, and pinned crackers to my tail; and I have been afraid to mount ever since.

Old Lady Lamb. Do you hear this, doctor! throw brick-bats at him, and pin crackers to his tail! can these things be stood by?

Maw. I told them so—says I, I does nothing clandecently; I stand here contagious to his majesty's guards, and I charges you upon your apparels not to mislist me.

Old Lady Lamb. And it had no effect?

Maw. No more than if I spoke to so many postesses; but if he advises me to go a preaching, and quit my shop, I'll make an excressance farther into the country.

Old Lady Lamb. An excursion, you would say.

Maw. I am but a sheep, but my bleatings shall be heard afar off, and that sheep shall become a shepherd: nay, if it be only, as it were, a shepherd's dog, to bark the stray lambs into the fold.

Old Lady Lamb. He wants method, doctor.

Dr Cant. Yes, madam, but there is matter; and I despise not the ignorant,

Maw. He's a saint—till I went after him, I was little better than the devil; my conscience was tanned with sin like a piece of neat's leather, and had no more feeling than the sole of my shoe; always a roving after fantastical delights: I used to go every Sunday evening to the Three Hats at Islington; it's a public-house; mayhap your ladyship may know it: I was a great lover of skittles too, but now I can't bear them.

Old Lady Lamb. What a blessed reformation!

Maw. I believe, doctor, you never know'd as how I was instigated one of the stewards of the reforming society. I convicted a man of five oaths, as last Thursday was se'nnight, at the Pewter Platter, in the Borough; and another of

three, while he was playing trap-ball in St George's Fields: I bought this waistcoat out of my share of the money.

Old Lady Lamb. But how do you mind your business?

Maw. We have lost almost all our customers, because I keeps extorting them whenever they come into the shop.

Old Lady Lamb. And how do you live?

Maw. Better than ever we did; while we were worldly minded, my wife and I (for I am married to as likely a woman as you shall see in a thousand) could hardly make things do at all; but since this good man has brought us into the road of the righteous, we have always plenty of every thing; and my wife goes as well dressed as a gentlewoman——we have had a child too.

Old Lady Lamb. Merciful!

Maw. And between you and me, doctor, I believe Susy's breeding again.

Dr Cant. Thus it is, madam; I am constantly told, though I can hardly believe it, a blessing follows wherever I come.

Maw. And yet, if you would hear how the neighbours reviles my wife, saying, as how she sets no store by me, because we have words now and then; but, as I says, if such was the case, would ever she have cut me down that there time as I was melancholy, and she found me hanging behind the door? I don't believe there's a wife in the parish would have done so by her husband.

Dr Cant. I believe 'tis near dinner time, and Sir John will require my attendance.

Maw. Oh! I am troublesome—nay, I only come to you, doctor, with a message from Mrs Grunt. I wish your ladyship heartily and heartily farewell; doctor, a good day to you.

Old Lady Lamb. Mr Maw-worm, call on me some time this afternoon; I want to have a little private discourse with you; and, pray, my service to your spouse.

Maw. I will, madam; you are a malefactor to all goodness; I'll wait upon your ladyship; I will, indeed: [*Going, returns.*] Oh, doctor, that's true; Susy desired me to give her kind love and respects to you. [*Exit.*

Dr Cant. Madam, if you please, I will lead you into the parlour.

Old Lady Lamb. No, doctor, my coach waits at the door; I only called upon the business you know of; and partly indeed to see how you did, after the usage you had met with; but I have struck the wretch out of my will for it.

Enter SEYWARD.

Dr Cant. Charles, you may lay those papers by again, but in some place where you'll easily find them; for I believe we shall have occasion for them some time this afternoon.

Seyw. I'll take care, sir.

[*Exeunt Dr* CANT. *and Old Lady* LAMB.

—Occasion for them this afternoon!——Then there's no time to be lost; the coast is clear, and this is her chamber—What's the matter with me? The thought of speaking to her throws me into a disorder. There's nobody within, I believe—I'll knock again.

Enter BETTY.

Is your lady busy?

Betty. I believe she's only reading, sir.

Seyw. Will you do me the favour to let her know, if she's at leisure, I beg to speak with her upon some earnest business?

Enter CHARLOTTE.

Charl. Who's that?

Betty. She's here.——Mr Seyward, madam, desires to speak with you.

Charl. Oh, your servant, Mr Seyward.—Here, take this odious Homer, and lay him up again; he tires me.—[*Exit* BETTY.]——How could the blind wretch make such an horrid fuss about a fine woman, for so many volumes together, and give us no account of her amours? You have read him, I suppose, in the Greek, Mr Seyward?

Seyw. Not lately, madam.

Charl. But do you so violently admire him now?

Seyw. The critics say he has his beauties, madam; but Ovid has been always my favourite.

Charl. Ovid—Oh, he is ravishing!

Seyw. So art thou, to madness! [*Aside.*

Charl. Lord! how could one do to learn Greek?—Were you a great while about it?

Seyw. It has been half the business of my life, madam.

Charl. That's cruel now; then you think one could not be mistress of it in a month or two?

Seyw. Not easily, madam.

Charl. They tell me it has the softest tone for love of any language in the world—I fancy I could soon learn it. I know two words of it already.

Seyw. Pray, madam, what are they?

Charl. Stay—let me see—Oh—ay—Zoe kai psuche.

Seyw. I hope you know the English of them, madam.

Charl. Oh lud! I hope there is no harm in it—I'm sure I heard the doctor say it to my lady—pray, what is it?

Seyw. You must first imagine, madam, a tender lover gazing on his mistress; and then, indeed, they have a softness in them; as thus—Zoe kai psuche—my life! my soul!

Charl. Oh the impudent young rogue! how his eyes spoke too!——What the deuce can he want with me?

Seyw. I have startled her!——she muses!

Charl. It always run in my head that this fellow had something in him above his condition; I'll know immediately.——Well, but your business with me, Mr Seyward? You have something of love in your head, I'll lay my life on't.

Seyw. I never yet durst own it, madam.

Charl. Why, what's the matter?

Seyw. My story is too melancholy to entertain a mind so much at ease as yours.

Charl. Oh, I love melancholy stories of all things:—pray, how long have you lived with your uncle, Mr Seyward?

Seyw. With Doctor Cantwell, I suppose you mean, madam?

Charl. Ay.

Seyw. He's no uncle of mine, madam.

Charl. You surprise me! not your uncle?

Seyw. No, madam; but that's not the only character the doctor assumes, to which he has no right.

Charl. Lord! I am concerned for you.

Seyw. So you would, madam, if you knew all.

Charl. I am already; but if there are any farther particulars of your story, pray let me hear them; and should any services be in my power, I am sure you may command them.

Seyw. You treat me with so kind, so gentle a hand, that I will unbosom myself to you.—My father, madam, was the younger branch of a genteel family in the North; his name, Trueman—but dying while I was yet in my infancy, I was left wholly dependent on my mother; a woman really pious and well-meaning, but——In short, madam, Doctor Cantwell fatally got acquainted with her, and, as he is now your father's bosom counsellor, soon became hers; for his hypocrisy had so great an effect on her weak spirit, that he entirely led and managed her at his pleasure. She died, madam, when I was but eight years old; and then I was indeed left an orphan.

Charl. Poor creature!—Lord! I cannot bear it!

Seyw. She left Doctor Cantwell her sole heir and executor: but I must do her the justice to say, I believe it was in the confirmation that he would take care of, and do justice to me; who, young as I was, I yet remember to have heard her recommend to him on her death-bed: and, indeed, he has so far taken care of me, that he sent me to a seminary abroad: and for these three years last past has kept me with him.

Charl. A seminary! Oh! Heavens! but why have you not strove to do yourself justice?

Seyw. Thrown so young into his power as I was—unknown and friendless, but through his means, to whom could I apply for succour? Nay, madam, I will confess, that on my return to England, I was at first tainted with his enthusiastic notions myself; and, for some time, as much imposed upon by him as others; till, by degrees, as he found it necessary to make use of, or totally discard me (which last he did not think prudent to do,) he was obliged to unveil himself to me in his proper colours—And I believe I can inform you of some parts of his private character, that may be the means of detecting one of the wickedest impostors that ever practised upon credulity.

Charl. But how has the wretch dared to treat you?

Seyw. In his ill and insolent humours, madam, he has sometimes the presumption to tell me that I am the object of his charity; and I own, madam, that I am humbled in my opinion, by his having drawn me into a connivance at some actions, which I cannot look back on without horror!

Charl. Indeed you cannot tell how I pity you; and depend upon it, if it be possible to serve you, by getting you out of the hands of this monster, I will.

Seyw. Once more, madam, let me assure you, that your generous inclination would be a consolation to me in the worst misfortunes; and, even in the last moment of painful death, would give my heart a joy.

Charl. Lord! the poor unfortunate boy loves me too—what shall I do with him?——Pray, Mr Seyward, what paper's that you have in your hand?——Is it relative to——

Seyw. Another instance of the conscience, and gratitude, which animates our worthy doctor.

Charl. You frighten me! pray what is the purport of it? Is it neither signed nor sealed?——

Seyw. No, madam; therefore to prevent it, by this timely notice, was my business here with you: your father gave it to the doctor first, to shew his counsel; who, having approved it, I understand this evening it will be executed.

Charl. But what is it?

Seyw. It grants to Doctor Cantwell, in present, four hundred pounds per annum, of which this very house is part; and, at your father's death, invests him in the whole remainder of his freehold estate.—For you, indeed, there is a charge of four thousand pounds upon it, provided you marry with the doctor's consent; if not, 'tis added to my lady's jointure——But your brother, madam, is, without conditions, utterly disinherited.

Charl. I am confounded!—What will become of us! My father now, I find, was serious——Oh, this insinuating hypocrite!——Let me see—ay—I will go this minute. Sir, dare you trust this in my hands for an hour only?

Seyw. Any thing to serve you—— [*Bell rings.*

Charl. Hark! they ring to dinner: pray, sir, step in: say I am obliged to dine abroad: and whisper one of the footmen to get a chair immediately; then do you take a proper occasion to slip out after me to Mr Double's chambers in the Temple; there I shall have time to talk further with you. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Dressing Room, with Table and Chairs.*

Enter CHARLOTTE, *with* BETTY, *taking off her Cloak, &c.*

Charl. Has any one been to speak with me, Betty?

Betty. Only Mr Darnley, madam; he said he would call again, and bid his servant stay below, to give him notice when you came home.

Charl. You don't know what he wanted?

Betty. No, madam; he seemed very uneasy at your being abroad.

Charl. Well, go and lay up those things—[*Exit* BETTY.] Ten to one but his wise head has found out something to be jealous of: if he lets me see it, I shall be sure to make him infinitely easy——here he comes.

Enter DARNLEY.

Darn. Your humble servant, madam.

Charl. Your servant, sir.

Darn. You have been abroad, I hear?

Charl. Yes, and now I am come home, you see.

Darn. You seem to turn upon my words, madam! Is there any thing particular in them?

Charl. As much as there is in my being abroad, I believe.

Darn. Might I not say you had been abroad without giving offence?

Charl. And might I not as well say I was come home, without your being so grave upon't?

Darn. Do you know any thing that should make me grave?

Charl. I know, if you are so, I am the worst person in the world you can possibly shew it to.

Darn. Nay, I don't suppose you do any thing you won't justify.

Charl. Oh, then I find I have done something you think I can't justify.

Darn. I don't say that neither; perhaps I am wrong in what I have said; but I have been so often used to ask pardon for your being in the wrong, that I am resolved henceforth never to rely on the insolent evidence of my own senses.

Charl. You don't know now, perhaps, that I think this pretty smart speech of yours is very dull; but, since that's a fault you can't help, I will not take it ill; come now, be as sincere on your side, and tell me seriously—Is not what real business I had abroad the very thing you want to be made easy in?

Darn. If I thought you would make me easy, I would own it.

Charl. Now we come to the point.——To-morrow morning, then, I give you my word to let you know it all; till when, there is a necessity for its being a secret; and I insist upon you believing it.

Darn. But pray, madam, what am I to do with private imagination in the mean time? that is not in my power to confine; and sure you won't be offended, if, to avoid the tortures that may give me, I beg you'll trust me with the secret now.

Charl. Don't press me, for positively I will not.

Darn. Will not?—cannot had been a kinder term—Is my disquiet of so little moment to you?

Charl. Of none, while your disquiet dares not trust the assurances I have given you. If you expect I should confide in you for life, don't let me see you dare not take my word for a day; and, if you are wise, you'll think so fair a trial a favour.

Darn. If you intend it such—it is a favour; if not 'tis something—so—come, let's wave the subject.

Charl. With all my heart. Have you seen my brother lately?

Darn. Yes, madam; and he tells me, it seems the doctor is the man your father has resolved upon.

Charl. 'Tis so; nay, and what will more surprise you, he leaves me only to the choice of him, or of no fortune.

Darn. And may I, without offence, beg leave to know what resolution you have taken upon it?

Charl. I have not taken any; I do not know what to do; what would you advise me to?

Darn. I advise you to? nay, you are in the right to make it a question.

Charl. He says he'll settle all his estate upon him, too.

Darn. O take it: take it, to be sure; its the fittest match in the world; you can't do a wiser thing certainly.

Charl. 'Twill be as wise, at least, as the method you take to prevent it.

Darn. Is't possible? how can you torture me with this indifference?

Charl. Why do you insult me with such a barefaced jealousy?

Darn. Is it a crime to be concerned for what becomes of you? Has not your father openly declared against me, in favour of another? How is it possible, at such a time, not to have a thousand fears? What though they are false and groundless, are they not still the effect of love, alarmed, and anxious to be satisfied? I have an heart that cannot bear disguises; but, when 'tis grieved, in spite of me, will shew it——Pray pardon me——but when I am told you went out in the utmost hurry, with some writings to a lawyer, and took the doctor's nephew with you,

even in the very hour your father had proposed him as an husband, what am I to think? Can I, must I suppose my senses fail me? If I have eyes, have ears, and have an heart, must it still be a crime to think I see and hear, and feel that I am wronged?

Charl. Well, I own, it looks ill-natured now, not to shew him some concern——but then, this jealousy I must and will get the better of, or we shall be miserable.

Darn. Speak, Charlotte; is still my jealousy a crime?

Charl. If you still insist on it as a proof of love, then I must tell you, sir, 'tis of that kind, that only slighted hearts are pleased with——when I am so reduced, perhaps I may bear it. The fact you charge me with, is true: I have been abroad; but let appearances be ever so strong, while there is a possibility that what I have done may be innocent, I won't bear a look that tells me to my face, you dare suspect me. If you have doubts, why don't you satisfy them before you see me? Can you suppose I am to stand confounded, like a criminal, before you?——Come, come, there's nothing shews so low a mind, as those grave and insolent jealousies.

Darn. However, madam, mine you won't find so low as you imagine; and, since I see your tyranny arises from your mean opinion of me, 'tis time to be myself, and disavow your power; you use it now beyond my bearing; not only impose on me to disbelieve my senses, but do it with such an imperious air, as if my manly reason were your slave, and this despicable frame that follows you, durst shew no signs of life but what you vouchsafe to give it.

Charl. You are in the right: go on—suspect me still—believe the worst you can—'tis all true—I don't justify myself.——Why do you trouble me with your complaints? If you are master of that manly reason you boasted, give a manly proof of it; at once resume your liberty; despise me; go off in triumph now, like a king in a tragedy; and let me see you scorn the woman, whose overbearing falsehood would insult your senses.

Darn. Is this the end of all, then? and are those tender protestations you have made me, for such I thought them, when, with a kind reluctance, you gave me something more than hope—what all—oh, Charlotte, all come to this!

Charl. Oh, lud! I am growing silly; if I hear on, I shall tell him every thing; 'tis but another struggle, and I shall conquer it.——So, you are not gone, I see.

Darn. Do you then wish me gone, madam?

Charl. Your manly reason will direct you.

Darn. This is too much——my heart can bear no more!——What, am I rooted here?

Enter SEYWARD.

Charl. At last I am relieved.—Well, Mr Seyward, is it done?

Seyw. I did not stir from the desk till it was entirely finished.

Charl. Where's the original?

Seyw. This is it, madam.

Charl. Very well; that, you know, you must keep; but come, we must lose no time; we will examine this in the next room.—Now I feel for him. [*Exit.*

Darn. This is not to be borne—Pray, Mr Charles, what private business have you with that lady?

Seyw. Sir!

Darn. I must know, young man.

Seyw. Not quite so young, but I can keep a secret, and a lady's too——you'll excuse me, sir. [*Exit.*

Darn. 'Sdeath!——I shall be laughed at by every body——I shall run distracted——this young fellow should repent his pertness, did not this house protect him.—This is Charlotte's contrivance to distract me——but—but what?—Oh!—I have love enough to bear this, and ten times as much.

Enter Colonel LAMBERT.

Col. Lamb. What, in raptures?

Darn. Pr'ythee——I am unfit to talk with you.

Col. Lamb. What, is Charlotte in her airs again?

Darn. I know not what she is.

Col. Lamb. Do you know where she is?

Darn. Retired this moment to her chamber with the young fellow there—the doctor's nephew.

Col. Lamb. Why, you are not jealous of the doctor, I hope?

Darn. Perhaps she'll be less reserved to you, and tell you wherein I have mistaken her.

Col. Lamb. Poor Frank! every plot I lay upon my sister's inclination for you, you are sure to ruin by your own conduct.

Darn. I own I have too little temper, and too much real passion, for a modish lover.

Col. Lamb. Come, come, make yourself easy once more; I'll undertake for you: If you'll fetch a cool turn in the Park, upon Constitution-Hill, in less than half an hour I'll come to you, and make you perfectly easy.

Darn. Dear Tom, you are a friend indeed!——I have a thousand things——but—you shall find me there. [*Exit.*

Enter CHARLOTTE *and* SEYWARD.

Col. Lamb. How now, sister? what have you done to Darnley? The poor fellow looks as if he had killed your parrot.

Charl. Psha! you know him well enough; I've only been setting him a love lesson; it a little puzzles him to get through it at first, but he'll know it all by to-morrow——you will be in the way, Mr Seyward.

Seyw. Madam, you may depend upon me: I have my full instructions. [*Exit.*

Col. Lamb. O ho! here's the business then; and it seems Darnley was not to be trusted with it; ha, ha! and pr'ythee, what is the mighty secret that is transacting between Seyward and you?

Charl. That's what he would have known, indeed; but you must know, I don't think it proper to let you tell him neither, for all your sly manner of asking.

Col. Lamb. Pray take your own time, dear madam; I am not in haste to know, I assure you.

Charl. Well, but hold; on second thoughts, you shall know part of this affair between Seyward and me; nay, I give you leave to tell Darnley too, on some conditions: 'tis true, I did design to have surprised you——but now——my mind's altered, that's enough.

Col. Lamb. Ay, for any mortal's satisfaction—but here comes my lady.

Enter Lady LAMBERT.

Lady Lamb. Away, away, colonel and Charlotte; both of you, away this instant.

Charl. What's the matter, madam?

Lady Lamb. I am going to put the doctor to his trial, that's all. I have considered the proposals you have made me to-day, colonel, and am convinced it ought not to be delayed an instant: so just now, as your father was composed in the arm chair to his afternoon's nap, I told the doctor in a half whisper, that I should be glad to have a word in private with him here; and he said he would wait upon me presently. You must know, Charlotte, Sir John has been pressing me to speak to you in his favour, and has desired me to hear what the doctor had to say upon that subject; but must I play a traiterous part now, and, instead of persuading you to the doctor, persuade the doctor against you?

Charl. Dear madam, why not? one moment's truce with the prude, I beg of you; don't startle at his first declaration, but let him go on till he shews the very bottom of his ugly heart.

Lady Lamb. I warrant you, I'll give a good account of him——but, as I live, here he comes.

Charl. Come, then, brother, you and I will be comode, and steal off.

[*Exeunt* CHARLOTTE *and Colonel.*

Enter Doctor CANTWELL.

[*The Colonel listening.*

Dr Cant. Here I am, madam, at your ladyship's command; how happy am I that you think me worthy——

Lady Lamb. Please to sit, sir.

Dr Cant. Well, but, dear lady, ha! You can't conceive the joyousness I feel at this so much desired interview. Ah, ah! I have a thousand friendly things to say to you; and how stands your precious health? is your naughty cold abated yet? I have scarce closed my eyes these two nights with my concern for you; and every watchful interval has sent a thousand sighs and prayers to Heaven for your recovery.

Lady Lamb. Your charity is too far concerned for me.

Dr Cant. Ah! don't say so, don't say so. You merit more than mortal man can do for you.

Lady Lamb. Indeed you over-rate me.

Dr Cant. I speak it from my heart; indeed, indeed, indeed I do.

Lady Lamb. O dear! you hurt my hand, sir.

Dr Cant. Impute it to my zeal, and want of words for expression: precious soul! I would not harm you for the world; no, it would be the whole business of my life——

Lady Lamb. But to the affair I would speak to you about.

Dr Cant. Ah, thou heavenly woman!

Lady Lamb. Your hand need not be there, sir.

Dr Cant. I was admiring the softness of this silk.

Lady Lamb. Ay, but I'm ticklish.

Dr Cant. They are indeed come to prodigious perfection in all manufactures: how wonderful is human art! here it disputes the prize with nature: that all this soft and gaudy lustre should be wrought from the labours of a poor worm!

Lady Lamb. But our business, sir, is upon another subject: Sir John informs me, that he thinks himself under no obligations to Mr Darnley, and therefore resolves to give his daughter to you.

Dr Cant. Such a thing has been mentioned, madam; but, to deal sincerely with you, that is not the happiness I sigh after; there is a soft and serious excellence for me, very different from what your step-daughter possesses.

Lady Lamb. Well, sir, pray be sincere, and open your heart to me.

Dr Cant. Open my heart! Can you then, sweet lady, be yet a stranger to it? Has no action of my life been able to inform you of my real thoughts? I hope you imagine not that it was from ill-will, or any other account but yours, that I urged Sir John to restrain your assemblies and visits: no, blessed creature, it proceeded from a zealous transport: I could not bear to see the gay, the young, and the impertinent, daily crowding round you, without a certain grudge; I might say, envy.

Lady Lamb. Well, sir, I take all this, as I suppose you intend it, for my good and spiritual welfare.

Dr Cant. Indeed I mean your cordial service.

Lady Lamb. I dare say you do: you are above the low momentary views of this world.

Dr Cant. Why, I should be so; and yet, alas! I find this mortal clothing of my soul is made like other men's, of sensual flesh and blood, and has its frailties.

Lady Lamb. We all have those, but yours are well corrected by your divine and virtuous contemplations.

Dr Cant. Alas, madam, my heart is not of stone: I may resist, call all my prayers, my fastings, tears and penance to my aid; but yet, I am

not an angel; I am still but a man; and virtue may strive, but nature will be uppermost.—I love you, then, madam.

Lady Lamb. Hold, sir. You've said enough to put you in my power. Suppose I now should let my husband, your benefactor, know the favour you design him?

Dr Cant. You cannot be so cruel.

Lady Lamb. Nor will, on this condition: that instantly you renounce all claim and title to Charlotte, and use your utmost interest with Sir John, to give her, with her full fortune, to Mr Darnley.

Enter Colonel LAMBERT.

Col. Lamb. Villain, monster, perfidious and ungrateful traitor! Your hypocrisy, your false zeal is discovered: and I am sent here by the hand of insulted Heaven, to lay you open to my father, and expose you to the world.

Dr Cant. Ha!

Lady Lamb. O, unthinking colonel!

Col. Lamb. Well, sir, what have you to say for yourself?

Dr Cant. I have nothing to say to you, colonel, nor for you——but you shall have my prayers.

Col. Lamb. Why, you profligate hypocrite, do you think to carry off your villainy with that sanctified air?

Dr Cant. I know not what you mean, sir. I have been in discourse here with my good lady, by permission of your worthy father.

Col. Lamb. Dog, did my father desire you to talk of love to my lady?

Dr Cant. Call me not dog, colonel: I hope we are both brother christians.——Yes, I will own I did beg leave to talk to her of love; for, alas, I am but a man; yet if my passion for your dear sister, which I cannot controul, be sinful——

Lady Lamb. Your noise, I perceive, is bringing up Sir John; manage with him as you will at present; I will withdraw, for I have an after-game to play, which may yet put this wretch effectually into our power. [*Exit.*

Enter Sir JOHN LAMBERT.

Sir J. Lamb. What uproar is this?

Col. Lamb. Nothing, sir, nothing; only a little broil of the good doctor's here—You are well rewarded for your kindness; and he would fain pay it back with triple interest to your wife: in short, sir, I took him here in the very fact of making a criminal declaration of love to my lady.

Dr Cant. Why, why, Sir John, would you not let me leave your house? I knew some dreadful method would be taken to drive me hence—O, be not angry, good colonel: but indeed, and indeed, you use me cruelly.

Sir J. Lamb. Horrible, wicked creature!—Doctor, let me hear it from you.

DrCant. Alas, sir, I am in the dark as much as you; but it should seem, for what purpose he best knows, your son hid himself somewhere hereabouts; and while I was talking to my lady, rushed in upon us—you know the subject, sir, on which I was to entertain her; and I might speak of my love for your daughter with more warmth than, perhaps, I ought; which the colonel over-hearing, he might possibly imagine I was addressing my lady herself; for I will not suspect, no, Heaven forbid! I will not suspect that he would intentionally forge a falsehood to dishonour me.

Sir J. Lamb. Now, vile detractor of all virtue, is your outrageous malice confounded?—What he tells you is true; he was talking to my lady by my consent; and what he said, he said by my orders.——Good man, be not concerned, for I see through their vile design.——Here, thou curse of my life, if thou art not lost to conscience, and all sense of honour, repair the injury you have attempted, by confessing your rancour, and throwing yourself at his feet.

Dr Cant. Oh, Sir John! for my sake——I will throw myself at the colonel's feet; nay, if that will please him, he shall tread on my neck.

Sir J. Lamb. What! mute, defenceless, hardened in thy malice?

Col. Lamb. I scorn the imputation, sir; and with the same repeated honesty avow, however cunningly he may have devised this gloss, that you are deceived.——What I tell you, sir, is true——these eyes, these ears, were witnesses of his audacious love, without the mention of my sister's name; directly, plainly, grossly tending to abuse the honour of your bed.

Sir J. Lamb. Villain, this instant leave my sight, my house, my family, for ever! Wife, children, servants, are all leagued against this pious man, and think to weary me by groundless clamours to discard him; but all shall not do. Your malice falls on your own wicked heads; to me it but the more endears him.

Col. Lamb. Doctor, you have triumphed.

Sir J. Lamb. Wretch, leave my house.

Dr Cant. Hold, good Sir John: I am now recovered from my surprise; let me then be an humble mediator——on my account, this must not be—I grant it possible, your son loves me not; but you must grant it too as possible, he might mistake me; to accuse me then, was but the error of his virtue; you ought to love him, thank him for his watchful care.

Sir J. Lamb. O miracle of charity!

Dr Cant. Come, come; such breaches must not be betwixt so good a son and father; forget, forgive, embrace him, cherish him, and let me bless the hour I was the occasion of so sweet a reconcilement.

Sir J. Lamb. Hear this, perverse and reprobate!—Oh, couldst thou wrong such more than mortal virtue!

Col. Lamb. Wrong him! the hardened impudence of this painted charity——

Sir J. Lamb. Peace, graceless infidel!

Col. Lamb. No, sir; though I would hazard life to gain you from the clutches of that wretch,

could die to reconcile my duty to your favour; yet, on the terms his villainy offers, it is merit to refuse it——I glory in the disgrace your errors give me——but, sir, I'll trouble you no more; to-day is his, to-morrow may be mine. [*Exit.*

Sir J. Lamb. Come, my friend; we'll go this instant, and sign the settlement.

Dr Cant. Sir, I now attend you, and take it without scruple: yes, you shall, since it is your good pleasure, make this settlement in my favour.

Sir J. Lamb. I will, doctor, I will; for that wretch ought to be punished, who, I now see, is incorrigible, and given over to perdition.

Dr Cant. And do you think I take your estate with such views?—No, sir—I receive it that I may have an opportunity to rouse his mind to virtue, by shewing him an instance of the forgiveness of injuries;—the return of good for evil.

Sir J. Lamb. O, my dear friend, my stay, and my guide! I am impatient till the affair is concluded.

Dr Cant. The will of Heaven be done in all things.

Sir J. Lamb. Poor dear man!—[*Turning to where the Colonel went off.*]—Oh, reprobate, profligate, hardened wretch, to use in this manner a person of his sanctity! [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Parlour in Sir* JOHN LAMBERT'S *House.*

Enter CHARLOTTE *and* SEYWARD.

Charl. You were a witness, then?

Seyw. I saw it signed, sealed, and delivered, madam.

Charl. And all passed without the least suspicion?

Seyw. Sir John signed it with such earnestness, and the doctor received it with such a seeming reluctance, that neither had the curiosity to examine a line of it.

Charl. Well, Mr Seyward, whether it succeeds to our ends or not, we have still the same obligations to you.——You saw with what a friendly warmth my brother heard your story; and I don't in the least doubt his being able to do something for you.

Seyw. What I have done, my duty bound me to; but pray, madam, give me leave, without offence, to ask you one innocent question.

Charl. Freely.

Seyw. Have you never suspected, that in all this affair, I have had some secret stronger motive than barely duty?

Charl. Yes.——But have you been in no apprehensions I should discover that motive?

Seyw. Pray, pardon me; I see already I have gone too far.

Charl. Not at all; it loses you no merit with me, nor is it in my nature to use any one ill that loves me, unless I loved that one again: then, indeed, there might be danger. Come, don't look grave; my inclinations to another shall not hinder me paying every one what's due to their merit: I shall, therefore, always think myself obliged to treat your misfortunes and your modesty with the utmost tenderness.

Seyw. Dear madam, mad as I am, I never hoped for more.

Charl. Then, I'll give you a great deal more; and to shew you my particular good opinion of you, I'll do you a favour, Mr Seyward, I never did any man since I was born: I'll be sincere with you.

Seyw. Is it then possible you can have loved another, to whom you never were sincere?

Charl. Alas, you are but a novice in the passion.—Sincerity is a dangerous virtue, and often surfeits what it ought to nourish. Therefore I take more pains to make the man I love believe I slight him, than, if possible, I would to convince you of my esteem and friendship.——Nay, I'll do more still; I'll shew you all the good nature you can desire; you shall make what love to me you please; but then I'll tell you the consequence: I shall certainly be pleased with it, and that will flatter you till I do you a mischief. Now do you think me sincere?

Seyw. I scarce consider that: but I'm sure you are agreeable.

Charl. Why, look you there, now; do you consider, that a woman had as lief be thought agreeable as handsome; and how can you suppose, from one of your sense, that I am not pleased with being told so?

Seyw. Was ever temper so enchanting!—Your good opinion is all I aim at.

Charl. Ay, but the more I give it you, the better you'll think of me still; and then I must think the better of you again; and then you the better of me, upon that too; and so at last I shall think seriously, and you'll begin to think ill of me. But I hope, Mr Seyward, your good sense will prevent all this.

Seyw. I see my folly, madam, and blush at my presumption. Madam, I humbly take my leave. [*Exit.*

Charl. Well, he's a pretty young fellow after all, and the very first, sure, that ever heard reason against himself with so good an understanding.——Lord, how one may live and learn!—I could not have believed that modesty in a young fellow could have been so amiable. And though I own there is, I know not what of dear delight in indulging one's vanity with them, yet upon serious reflection, we must confess, that truth and sincerity have a thousand charms beyond it. I be-

lieve I had as good confess all this to Darnley, and e'en make up the bustle with him too: but then he will so tease one for instances of real inclination——O gad!—I cann't bear the thought on't: and yet we must come together too—Well, Nature knows the way, to be sure, and so I'll e'en trust to her for it.

Enter Lady LAMBERT.

Lady Lamb. Dear Charlotte, what will become of us!—The tyranny of this subtle hypocrite is insupportable. He has so fortified himself in Sir John's opinion, by this last misconduct of your brother, that I begin to lose my usual power with him.

Charl. Pray, explain, madam.

Lady Lamb. In spite of all I could urge, he has consented that the doctor shall this minute come, and be his own advocate with you.

Charl. I'm glad on't; for the beast must come like a bear to the stake. I'm sure he knows I shall bait him.

Lady Lamb. No matter for that; he presses it, to keep Sir John still blind to his wicked designs upon me.——Therefore I am come to give you notice, that you might be prepared to receive him.

Charl. I'm obliged to your ladyship. Our meeting will be a tender scene, no doubt on't.

Lady Lamb. But I think I hear the doctor coming up stairs. My dear girl, at any rate keep your temper. I shall expect you in my dressing-room, to tell me the particulars of your conduct. [*Exit.*

Charl. He must have a great deal of impudence, to come in this manner to me.

Enter Doctor CANTWELL, *and* BETTY *introducing him.*

Betty. Doctor Cantwell desires to be admitted, madam.

Charl. Let him come in.——Your servant, sir.—Give us chairs, Betty, and leave the room.—[*Exit* BETTY.]—Sir, there's a seat.——What can the ugly cur say to me!—he seems a little puzzled [*Humming a tune.*

Dr Cant. Look ye, young lady, I am afraid, notwithstanding your good father's favour, I am not the man you would desire to be alone with upon this occasion.

Charl. Your modesty is pleased to be in the right.

Dr Cant. I'm afraid too, notwithstanding all my endeavours to the contrary, that you entertain a pretty bad opinion of me.

Charl. A worse, sir, of no mortal breathing!

Dr Cant. Which opinion is immovable.

Charl. No rock so firm!

Dr Cant. I am afraid, then, it will be a vain pursuit, when I solicit you, in compliance with my worthy friend's desire, and my own inclinations, to become my partner in that blessed estate, in which we may be a comfort and support to each other.

Charl. I would die rather than consent to it.

Dr Cant. In other words, you hate me.

Charl. Most transcendantly!

Dr Cant. Well, there is sincerity, at least, in your confession: you are not, I see, totally deprived of all virtue; though, I must say, I never could perceive in you but very little.

Charl. Oh, fie! you flatter me!

Dr Cant. No; I speak it with sorrow, because you are the daughter of my best friend. But how are we to proceed now? are we to preserve temper?

Charl. Oh! never fear me, sir; I shall not fly out, being convinced that nothing gives so sharp a point to one's aversion as good breeding; as, on the contrary, ill manners often hide a secret inclination.

Dr Cant. Well then, young lady, be assured, so far am I from the unchristian disposition of returning injuries, that your antipathy to me causes no hatred in my soul towards you; on the contrary, I would willingly make you happy, if it may be done according to my conscience, with the interest of Heaven in view.

Charl. Why, I cann't see, sir, how Heaven can be any way concerned in a transaction between you and me.

Dr Cant. When you marry any other person, my consent is necessary.

Charl. So I hear, indeed!——but pray, doctor, how could your modesty receive so insolent a power, without putting my poor father out of countenance with your blushes?

Dr Cant. I sought it not; but he would crowd it in among other obligations. He is good-natured; and I foresaw it might serve to pious purposes.

Charl. I don't understand you.

Dr Cant. I take it for granted that you would marry Mr Darnley. Am I right?

Charl. Once in your life perhaps you may.

Dr Cant. Nay, let us be plain. Would you marry him?

Charl. You're mighty nice, methinks.—Well, I would.

Dr Cant. Then I will not consent.

Charl. You won't?

Dr Cant. My conscience will not suffer me. I know you to be both luxurious and worldly-minded; and you would squander upon the vanities of the world those treasures which ought to be better laid out.

Charl. Hum!—I believe I begin to conceive you.

Dr Cant. If you can think of any project to satisfy my conscience, I am tractable. You know there is a considerable moiety of your fortune which goes to my lady in case of our disagreement.

Charl. That's enough, sir.—You think we should have a fellow-feeling in it. At what sum do you rate your concurrence to my inclinations? that settled, I am willing to strike the bargain.

Dr Cant. What do you think of half?

Charl. How! two thousand pounds!

Dr Cant. Why, you know you gain two thousand pounds; and really the severity of the times for the poor, and my own stinted pittance, which cramps my charities, will not suffer me to require less.

Charl. But how is my father to be brought into this?

Dr Cant. Leave that to my management.

Charl. And what security do you expect for the money?

Dr Cant. Oh! Mr Darnley is wealthy: when I deliver my consent in writing, he shall lay it down to me in bank bills.

Charl. Pretty good security!——on one proviso though.

Dr Cant. Name it.

Charl. That you immediately tell my father that you are willing to give up your interest to Mr Darnley.

Dr Cant. Hum!—stay—I agree to it; but in the mean time, let me warn you, child, not to expect to turn that, or what has now passed between us, to my confusion, by sinister construction, or evil representation to your father. I am satisfied of the piety of my own intentions, and care not what the wicked think of them; but force me not to take advantage of Sir John's good opinion of me, in order to shield myself from the consequences of your malice.

Charl. Oh! I shall not stand in my own light: I know your conscience and your power too well, dear doctor!

Dr Cant. Well, let your interest sway you. Thank Heaven, I am actuated by more worthy motives.

Charl. No doubt on't.

Dr Cant. Farewell, and think me your friend. [*Exit.*

Enter Colonel LAMBERT.

Charl. What this fellow's original was, I know not; but by his conscience and cunning he would make an admirable Jesuit.

Col. Lamb. Charlotte!

Charl. You may come in. Well, I hope you bring me a good account of the doctor.—What success?

Col. Lamb. All I could wish!—Seyward has given so strong and so fair a detail of his frauds and villanies of every kind, that my Lord Chief Justice made not the least hesitation to grant his warrant; and I have a tipstaff at the next door, when I give the word to take him.

Charl. Why should you not do it immediately?

Col. Lamb. Have a little patience; I have a farther design in my head.——But pray, sister, what secret's this that you have yet behind, in those writings that Seyward brought you?

Charl. Oh! that's what I cann't tell you.——But, by the way, what have you done with Darnley: why is not he here?

Col. Lamb. He has been here: but you must excuse him.—I told him how anxious you were about Seyward's affair, and he has taken him with him, in his own coach, to the Attorney-General's.

Charl. Well, I own he has gained upon me by this.

Col. Lamb. I am glad to hear that at last. But I must go and let my lady know what progress we have made in the doctor's business; because I have something particular to say to her. [*Exit.*

Enter Servant.

Serv. Madam, Mr Darnley.

Charl. Desire him to walk in. [*Exit Serv.*

Enter DARNLEY.

Darn. To find you thus alone, madam, is an happiness I did not expect, from the temper of our last parting.

Charl. I should have been as well pleased now to have been thanked, as reproached, for my good-nature; but you will be in the right, I find.

Darn. Indeed, you take me wrong. I literally meant that I was afraid you would not so soon think I had deserved this favour.

Charl. Well then, one of us has been in the wrong, at least.

Darn. 'Twas I, I own it—more is not in my power: all the amends possible I have made you: my very joy of seeing you has waited, till what you had at heart, unasked, was perfected for a rival, whom you had so justly compassionated.

Charl. Pooh! but why would you say unasked now? don't you consider your doing it so is half the merit of the action?—Lord! you have no art: you should have left me to have taken notice of that.—Only imagine now, how kind and handsome an acknowledgment you have robbed me of.

Darn. And yet how artfully you have paid it. With what a wanton charming ease you play upon my tenderness!

Charl. Well, but were not you silly now?

Darn. Come, you shall not be serious: you cann't be more agreeable.

Charl. Oh! but I am serious.

Darn. Then I'll be so.——Do you forgive me all?

Charl. What?

Darn. Are we friends, Charlotte?

Charl. O, Lord! but you have told me nothing of poor Seyward?

Darn. Must you needs know that before you answer me?

Charl. Lord! you are never well till you have talked one out of countenance.

Darn. Come, I won't be too particular; you shall answer nothing.——Give me but your hand only.

Charl. Psha! I won't pull off my glove, not I.

Darn. I'll take it as it is then.

Charl. Lord! there, there; eat it, eat it.

Darn. And so I could, by Heaven!

Charl. Oh, my glove! my glove! my glove! you are in a perfect storm! Lord! if you make such a rout with one's hand only, what would you do if you had one's heart?

Darn. That's impossible to tell.——But you were asking me of Seyward, madam?

Charl. Oh, ay! that's true. Well, now you are very good again.——Come, tell me all the affair, and then you shall see—how I will like you.

Darn. Oh! that I could thus play with inclination!

Charl. Psha! but you don't tell me now.

Darn. There is not much to tell—only this: We met the Attorney-General, to whom he has given a very sensible account of himself, and the doctor's proceedings.—But, still more fortunate! there happened to be a gentleman present, who came from the same part of the country with Seyward, and is well acquainted with his family, and even remembers the circumstance of his mother's death; who promises to be speedy and diligent in his enquiries.—We have been to the Commons to search for her will, but none has been entered.—But as it can be proved she died possessed of eight or ten thousand pounds, the Attorney-General seems very clear in his opinion, that as the doctor, at the time of the death of Seyward's mother, was intrusted with her whole affairs, the Court of Equity will oblige him to be accountable.

Charl. If Seyward does not recover his fortune, you must absolutely get him a commission, and bring him into acquaintance.

Darn. Upon my word I will.

Charl. And shew him to all the women of taste; and I'll have you call him my pretty fellow too.

Darn. I will, indeed!—but hear me—

Charl. You cann't conceive how prettily he makes love.

Darn. Not so well as you make your defence, Charlotte.

Charl. Lord! I had forgot; he is to teach me Greek, too.

Darn. Trifling tyrant! how long, Charlotte, do you think you can find new evasions for what I say to you?

Charl. Lord, you are horrid silly! but since 'tis love that makes you such a dunce—poor Darnley! I forgive you.

Darn. That's kind, however——But, to complete my joy, be kinder yet—and—

Charl. Oh! I cann't! I cann't!—Lord! did you never ride a horse-match?

Darn. Was ever so wild a question!

Charl. Because, if you have, it runs in my head you galloped a mile beyond the winning-post, to make sure on't.

Darn. Now, I understand you. But since you will have me touch every thing so very tenderly, Charlotte, how shall I find proper words to ask you the lover's last necessary question.

Charl. Oh! there's a thousand points to be adjusted before that's answered.

Enter Colonel LAMBERT.

Col. Lamb. Name them this moment; for, positively, this is the last time of asking.

Charl. Psha! who sent for you?

Col. Lamb. I only came to teach you to speak plain English, my dear.

Charl. Lord! mind your own business, cann't you?

Col. Lamb. So I will; for I will make you do more of yours in two minutes, than you would have done without me in a twelvemonth. Why, how now!—do you think the man's to dangle after your ridiculous airs for ever?

Charl. This is mighty pretty!

Col. Lamb. You'll say so on Thursday se'nnight, for, let affairs take what turn they will in the family, that's positively your wedding day—Nay, you shan't stir.

Charl. Was ever such assurance!

Darn. Upon my life, madam, I am out of countenance! I don't know how to behave myself.

Charl. No, no; let him go on only—this is beyond whatever was known, sure!

Col. Lamb. Ha! ha! if I was to leave you to yourselves, what a couple of pretty out-of-countenanced figures you would make! humming and hawing upon the vulgar points of jointure and pin-money.——Come, come, I know what's proper on both sides; you shall leave it to me.

Darn. I had rather Charlotte would name her own terms to me.

Col. Lamb. Have you a mind to any thing particular, madam?

Charl. Why, sure! what, do you think I'm only to be filled out as you please, and sweetened and sipped up like a dish of tea?

Col. Lamb. Why, pray, madam, when your tea's ready, what have you to do but to drink it? But you, I suppose, expect a lover's heart, like your lamp, should be always flaming at your elbow; and when it's ready to go out, you indolently supply it with the spirit of contradiction.

Charl. And so you suppose that your assurance has made an end of this matter?

Col. Lamb. Not till you have given him your hand upon it.

Charl. That then would complete it?

Col. Lamb. Perfectly.

Charl. Why, then, take it, Darnley.—Now, I presume, you are in high triumph, sir.

Col. Lamb. No, sister; now you are consistent with that good sense I always thought you mistress of.

Charl. And now I beg we may separate; for our being seen together, at this critical juncture, may give that devil, the doctor, suspicion of a confederacy, and make him set some engine at work that we are not aware of.

Col. Lamb. It's a very proper caution. Come along, Darnley; nay, you must leave her now, whatever violence you do yourself.

Charl. Ay, ay, take him with you, brother—or stay, Darnley; if you please, you may come along with me. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Parlour in Sir* JOHN LAMBERT'S *house.*

Enter DARNLEY *and* CHARLOTTE.

Charl. But really, will you stand to the agreement, though, that I have made with the doctor?

Darn. Why not? you shall not break your word upon my account, though he might be a villain you gave it to.

Charl. Well, I take it as a compliment; not but I have some hopes of getting over it, and justly too: but don't let me tell you now, I love to surprise——though you shall know all, if you desire it.

Darn. No, Charlotte; I don't want the secret: I am satisfied in your inclination to trust me.

Charl. Well then, I'll keep the secret, only to shew you that you may, upon occasion, trust me with one.

Darn. But pray, has the doctor yet given you any proof of his having declined his interest to your father?

Charl. Yes; he told me just now he had brought him to pause upon it, and does not question in two days to complete it; but desires, in the mean time, you will be ready and punctual with the premium.

Darn. Suppose I should talk with Sir John myself?—'tis true he has slighted me of late.

Charl. No matter—Here he comes—This may open another scene of action to that I believe my brother's preparing for.

Enter Sir JOHN *and Lady* LAMBERT.

Sir J. Lamb. Mr Darnley, I am glad I have met you here.

Darn. I have endeavoured twice to-day, sir, to pay my respects to you.

Sir J. Lamb. Sir, I'll be plain with you——I went out to avoid you; but where the welfare of a child is concerned, you must not take it ill if we don't stand upon ceremony—However, since I have reason now to be more in temper than perhaps I was at that time, I shall be glad to talk with you.

Darn. I take it as a favour, sir.

Sir J. Lamb. You must allow, Mr Darnley, that conscience is the rule which every honest man ought to walk by.

Darn. 'Tis granted, sir.

Sir J. Lamb. Then give me leave to tell you, sir, that giving you my daughter would be to act against that conscience I pretend to, while I thought you an ill liver; and consequently the same tie obliges me to bestow her on a better man——

Darn. Well, but, sir, to come to the point.—Suppose the doctor (whom, I presume, you design her for) actually consents to give me up his interest?

Sir J. Lamb. But why do you suppose, sir, he will give up his interest?

Darn. I only judge from what your daughter tells me, sir.

Sir J. Lamb. My daughter!

Darn. I appeal to her.

Charl. And I appeal even to yourself, sir—— Has not the doctor just now in the garden spoke in favour of Mr Darnley to you? Nay, pray, sir, be plain; because more depends on that than you can easily imagine or believe.

Sir J. Lamb. What senseless insinuation have you got into your head now?

Charl. Be so kind, sir, first to answer me, that I may be better able to inform you.

Sir J. Lamb. Well, I own he has declined his interest in favour of Mr Darnley; but I must tell you, madam, he did it in so modest, so friendly, so good-natured, so conscientious a manner, that I now think myself more than ever bound in honour to espouse him.

Charl. But now, sir, (only for argument's sake) suppose I could prove that all this seeming virtue was artificial; that his regard for Mr Darnley was neither founded upon modesty, friendship, good-nature, nor conscience; or, in short, that he has, like a villain, bartered, bargained to give me to Mr Darnley for half the four thousand pounds you valued his consent at; I say, sir, suppose this could be proved, where would be his virtue then?

Sir J. Lamb. It is impious to suppose it.

Charl. Then, sir, from what principle must you suppose that I accuse him?

Sir J. Lamb. From an obstinate prejudice to all that's good and virtuous.

Charl. That's too hard, sir. But the worst your opinion can provoke me to, is to marry Mr Darnley without either his consent or yours.

Sir J. Lamb. What, do you brave me, madam?

Charl. No, sir; but I scorn a lie; and will so far vindicate my integrity, as to insist on your believing me; if not, as a child you abandon, I have a right to throw myself into other arms for protection.

Darn. Dear Charlotte, how your spirit charms me!

Sir J. Lamb. I am confounded. These tears cannot be counterfeit; nor can this be true.

Lady Lamb. Indeed, my dear, I fear it is. Give me leave to ask you one question. In all our mutual course of happiness, have I ever yet deceived you with a falsehood?

Sir J. Lamb. Never.

Lady Lamb. Would you then believe me

should I accuse him even of crimes which virtue blushes but to mention?

Sir J. Lamb. To what extravagance would you drive me?

Lady Lamb. I would before have undeceived you, when his late artifice turned the honest duty of your son into his own reproach and ruin: but knowing then your temper was inaccessible, I durst not offer it.—But suppose I should be able to let you see his villany; make him repeat his odious love to me in your own hearing; at once throw off the mask, and shew the barefaced traitor?

Sir J. Lamb. Is it possible?

Lady Lamb. But then, sir, I must prevail on you to descend to the poor shifts we are reduced to.

Sir J. Lamb. All; to any thing, to ease me of my doubts! make me but witness of this fact, and I shall soon accuse myself, and own my folly equal to his baseness.

Lady Lamb. Observe then, they that set toils for beasts of prey——

Sir J. Lamb. Place me where you please.

Lady Lamb. Behind that screen you may easily conceal yourself.

Sir J. Lamb. Be it so.

Lady Lamb. Mr Darnley, shall we beg your leave? and you, Charlotte, take the least suspected way to send the doctor to me directly.

Charl. I have a thought will do it, madam.

Sir J. Lamb. Oh, Charlotte! Oh, Mr Darnley!

Darn. Have but resolution, sir, and fear nothing.

[*Exeunt* DARNLEY *and* CHARLOTTE.

Lady Lamb. Now, sir, you are to consider what a desperate disease I have undertaken to cure: therefore, be sure to keep close and still; and when the proof is full, appear at your discretion.

Sir J. Lamb. Fear not; I will conform myself—Yet, be not angry, my love, if in a case like this, where I should not believe even him accusing you; be not angry, I say, if I have also charity enough to hope you may yet be deceived in what you charge him with, till the evidence of my own senses assure me of the contrary.

Lady Lamb. 'Tis just.

Sir J. Lamb. Hark! I think I hear him coming.

Lady Lamb. Now, my dear, remember your promise to have patience.

Sir J. Lamb. Rely upon't.

Lady Lamb. To your post then.

Sir J. Lamb. If this be truth, what will the world come to! [*Sir* JOHN *goes behind.*

Enter Doctor CANTWELL, *with a Book.*

Dr Cant. Madam, your woman tells me, that being here, and alone, you desired to speak with me.

Lady Lamb. I did, sir—but, that we may be sure that we are alone, pray shut the outward door, and see that the passage be clear too.—Another surprise might ruin us—is all safe?

Dr Cant. I have taken care, madam.

Lady Lamb. But I'm afraid I interrupt your meditations.

Dr Cant. No, madam, no; I was only looking over some pious exhortations here, for the use of a society of chosen brethren.

Lady Lamb. Ah, doctor! what have you done to me? the trouble of my mind since our last unfortunate conference, is not to be expressed. You indeed discovered to me, what, perhaps, for my own peace, 'twere better I had never been acquainted with; but I had not sufficient time to lay my heart open to you.

Dr Cant. Whither, madam, would you lead me?

Lady Lamb. I have been uneasy, too, not knowing how far you might mistake my behaviour on the last accident that happened; but I was really so shocked, so terrified, I knew not what I was doing: only, had I joined in your defence against the colonel, it would have been evident that I was his enemy; and I have uses for his friendship. Silence, therefore, was my only prudent part; and I knew your credit with Sir John needed no support.

Dr Cant. Let me presume then to hope, that what I did, you judge was self-defence, and pure necessity.

Lady Lamb. And perhaps, after all, the accident was lucky; for Sir John, in order to obviate any ill constructions that may be put upon it, insists now that we should be more together, to let the world see his confidence in us both. This relieves us from restraint, and I now dare tell you—but no—I won't—

Dr Cant. But why, madam?—Let me beseech you—

Lady Lamb. No—besides—what need you ask me—

Dr Cant. Ah! do not endeavour to decoy my foolish heart, too apt to flatter itself. You cannot, sure, think kindly of me?

Lady Lamb. Well, well, I would have you imagine so.

Dr Cant. Besides, may I not with reason suspect that this apparent goodness is but artifice, a shadow of compliance, meant only to persuade me from your daughter.

Lady Lamb. Methinks this doubt of me seems rather founded on your settled resolution not to resign her.—'Tis she, I find, is your substantial happiness.

Dr Cant. Oh, that you could but fear I thought so!

Lady Lamb. I am convinced of it. I can assure you, sir, I should have saved you this trouble, had I known how deeply you were engaged to her.

Dr Cant. Tears!—then I must believe you—but indeed you wrong me. To prove my innocence, it is not an hour since I pressed Sir John to give Charlotte to young Darnley.

Lady Lamb. Mere artifice. You knew that modest resignation would make Sir John warmer in your interest.

Dr Cant. No, indeed, indeed. I had other

motives, which you may hereafter be made acquainted with, and will convince you—

Lady Lamb. Well, sir, now I'll give you reason to guess the reason why, at our last meeting, I pressed you so warmly to resign Charlotte.

Dr Cant. Ah dear! ah dear!

Lady Lamb. You cannot blame me for having opposed your happiness, when my own, perhaps, depended upon it.

Dr Cant. Spare me, spare me: you kill me with this kindness.

Lady Lamb. But, now that I have discovered my weakness, be secret; for the least imprudence—

Dr Cant. It is a vain fear.

Lady Lamb. Call it not vain: my reputation is dearer to me than life.

Dr Cant. Where can it find so sure a guard? the grave austerities of my life will dumb-found suspicion, and yours may defy detraction.

Lady Lamb. Well, doctor, 'tis you must answer for my folly.

Dr Cant. I take it all upon myself. Heaven, 'tis true, forbids certain gratifications; but there are ways of reconcilement, and laying the fears of a too scrupulous conscience.

Lady Lamb. Every way, I perceive, you are determined to get the better of me; but there's one thing still to be afraid of.

Dr Cant. Nothing, nothing.

Lady Lamb. My husband, Sir John.

Dr Cant. Alas, poor man, I will answer for him. Between ourselves, madam, your husband is weak; I can lead him by the nose any where.

Enter Sir JOHN LAMBERT.

Sir J. Lamb. No, caitiff, I'm to be led no farther.

Dr Cant. Ah! woman.

Sir J. Lamb. Is this your sanctity, this your doctrine, these your meditations?

Dr Cant. Is then my brother in a conspiracy against me?

Sir J. Lamb. Your brother! I have been your friend, indeed, to my shame; your dupe; but your spell has lost its hold: no more canting; it will not serve your turn any longer.

Lady Lamb. Now Heaven be praised!

Dr Cant. It seems you wanted an excuse to part with me.

Sir J. Lamb. Ungrateful wretch!—but why do I reproach you? Had I not been the weakest of mankind, you never could have proved so great a villain. Get out of my sight; leave my house: of all my follies, which is it tells you, that if you stay much longer, I shall not be tempted to wrest you out of the hands of the law, and punish you as you deserve?

Dr Cant. Well, but first let me ask you, sir, who it is you menace? Consider your own condition, and where you are.

Sir J. Lamb. What would the villain drive at?—leave me—I forgive you—but once more I tell you, seek some other place——out of my house!—This instant be gone, and see my shameful face no more.

Dr Cant. Nay, then, 'tis my duty to exert myself, and let you know that I am master here. Turn you out, sir; this house is mine: and now, sir, at your peril, dare to insult me.

Sir J. Lamb. Oh, Heavens! 'tis true; whither shall I fly, to hide me from the world?

Lady Lamb. Whither are you going, sir?

Sir J. Lamb. I know not—but here, it seems, I am a trespasser—the master of the house has warned me hence—and, since the right is now in him, 'tis just I should resign it.

Lady Lamb. You shall not stir. He dares not act with such abandoned insolence. No, sir, possession still is yours. If he pretends a right, let him by open course of law maintain it.

Dr Cant. Ha! Here! Seyward! [*Exit.*

Enter Old Lady LAMBERT *and* MAW-WORM.

Sir J. Lamb. Who is this fellow? what do you want, man?

Maw. My lady, come up.

Old Lady Lamb. How now!

Maw. He wants to know who I be.

Old Lady Lamb. The gentleman is a friend of mine, son. I was carrying him in a coach to attend a controversy that's to be held this evening, at the Reverend Mr Scruple's, about an affair of simony, and called to take up the doctor. But what strange tales are these I hear below?

Sir J. Lamb. The doctor is a villain, madam. I have detected him; detected him in the horrible design of seducing my wife.

Maw. It's unpossible.

Sir J. Lamb. What do you say, man?

Maw. I say it's unpossible. He has been locked up with my wife for hours together, morning, noon, and night, and I never found her the worse for him.

Old Lady Lamb. Ah, son! son!

Sir J. Lamb. What is your ladyship going to say now?

Old Lady Lamb. The doctor is not in fault.

Sir J. Lamb. 'Slife, madam!

Old Lady Lamb. Oh, he swears! he swears! years in growing good, we become profligate in a moment. If you swear again, I won't stay in the house.

Maw. Nor I neither: aren't you ashamed of yourself? have you no commenseration on your soul?—Ah! poor wicked sinner! I pity you.

Sir J. Lamb. 'Sdeath! and the devil!

Maw. If you swear any more, I'll inform against you.

Sir J. Lamb. Why would you bring this idiot, madam?

Maw. Ah, do despise me, I'm the prouder for it; I likes to be despised.

Enter CHARLOTTE.

Charl. Oh, dear papa, I shall faint away; there's murder doing.

Sir J. Lamb. Who? where? what is it?

Charl. The doctor, sir, and Seyward, were at high words just now in the garden; and, upon a sudden, there was a pistol fired between them. Oh! I'm afraid poor Seyward is killed.

Sir J. Lamb. How?

Charl. Oh, here he comes himself; he'll tell you more.

Enter CANTWELL, DARNLEY, SEYWARD, *and Servants.*

Darn. Here, bring in this ruffian; this is villany beyond example.

Sir J. Lamb. What means this outrage?

Lady Lamb. I tremble.

Seyw. Don't be alarmed, madam——there is no mischief done: what was intended, the doctor here can best inform you.

Sir J. Lamb. Mr Darnley, I am ashamed to see you

Maw. So you ought; but this good man is ashamed of nothing.

Dr Cant. Alas! my enemies prevail.

Seyw. In short, gentlemen, the affair is circumstantially this:—The doctor called me out into the pavilion in the garden; appeared in great disorder; told me here was a sudden storm raised, which he was not sufficiently prepared to weather. He said, his dependance was upon me; and, at all events, I must be ready to swear, when he called upon me, I had seen him pay Sir John several large sums of money. He talked confusedly about giving value for an estate; but I boldly refused to perjure myself; and told him, on the contrary, I was satisfied he had fleeced Sir John of several large sums, under pretence of charitable uses, which he secretly converted to his own.—This stung him—and he fastened at my throat. Then, indeed, all temper left me; and, disengaging myself from his hold, with a home-blow struck him down. At this, grown desperate, he ran with fury to some pistols that hung above the chimney; but in the instant he reached one, I seized upon his wrist; and as we grappled, the pistol firing to the ceiling, alarmed the family.

Old Lady Lamb. This is a lie, young man; I see the devil standing at your elbow.

Maw. So do I, with a great big pitchfork pushing him on.

Dr Cant. Well, what have you more against me?

Darn. More, sir, I hope is needless—but, if Sir John is yet unsatisfied——

Sir J. Lamb. Oh! I have seen too much.

Dr Cant. I demand my liberty.

Sir J. Lamb. Let him go.

Enter Colonel LAMBERT, *Tipstaff, and Attendants.*

Col. Lamb. Hold, sir! not so fast; you cann't pass.

Dr Cant. Who, sir, shall dare to stop me?

Col. Lamb. Within, there!

Tipstaff. Is your name Cantwell, sir?

Dr Cant. What if it be, sir?

Tipstaff. Then, sir, I have my Lord Chief Justice's warrant against you.

Dr Cant. Against me?

Tipstaff. Yes, sir, for a cheat and impostor.

Old Lady Lamb. What does he say?

Sir J. Lamb. Dear son, what is this?

Col. Lamb. Only some action of the doctor's, sir, which I have affidavits in my hand here to prove, from more than one creditable witness, and I think it my duty to make the public acquainted with; if he can acquit himself of them, so; if not, he must take the consequence.

Dr Cant. Well, but stay; let the accusations against me be what they will, by virtue of this conveyance I am still master here; and, if I am forced to leave the house myself, I will shut up the doors—nobody shall remain behind.

Sir J. Lamb. There! there! indeed he stings me to the heart! for that rash act, reproach and endless shame will haunt me!

Charl. No, sir!—be comforted.—Even there, too, his wicked hopes must leave him; for know, the fatal deed, which you intended to sign, is here, even yet unsealed and innocent!

Sir J. Lamb. What mean you?

Charl. I mean, sir, that this deed by accident falling into this gentleman's hands, his generous concern for our family discovered it to me; and that, in concert, we procured that other to be drawn exactly like it; which, in your impatience to execute, passed unsuspected for the original. Their only difference is, that wherever here you read the doctor's name, there you'll find my brother's.

Dr Cant. Come, sir, lead me where you please.

Col. Lamb. Secure your prisoner.

Old Lady Lamb. I don't know what to make of all this.

Maw. They'll all go to the devil for what they are doing.—Come away, my lady, and let us see after the good dear doctor. Ay, do laugh, you'll go to the devil for all that.—Come, my lady, you go first.

[*Exeunt* MAW-WORM, *and Old Lady* LAMB.

Charl. Now, Darnley, I hope I have made atonement for your jealousy.

Darn. You've banished it for ever! this was beyond yourself surprising.

Col. Lamb. Sister——

Charl. Come, no set speeches; if I deserve your thanks, return them in friendship to your first preserver.

Col Lamb. The business of my life shall be to merit it.

Seyw. And mine, to speak my sense of obligations.

Sir J. Lamb. Oh, my child! for my deliverance, I can only reward you here.——For you, my son, whose filial virtue I have injured, this honest deed shall in every article be ratified.——And, for the sake of that hypocritical villain, I declare, that from henceforward I renounce all pious folks; I will have an utter abhorrence for every thing that bears the appearance——

Charl. Nay, now, my dear sir, I must take the

liberty to tell you, you carry things too far, and go from one extreme to another.—What! because a worthless wretch has imposed upon you, under the fallacious shew of austere grimace, will you needs have it every body is like him? confound the good with the bad, and conclude there are no truly religious in the world? Leave, my dear sir, such rash consequences to fools and libertines.—Let us be careful to distinguish between virtue and the appearance of it. Guard, if possible, against doing honour to hypocrisy.—But, at the same time, let us allow there is no character in life greater or more valuable than that of the truly devout—nor any thing more noble, or more beautiful, than the fervour of a sincere piety. [*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

CONSTANT COUPLE.

BY FARQUHAR.

PROLOGUE.

BY A FRIEND.

Poets will think nothing so checks their fury
As wits, cits, beaux, and women for their jury.
Our spark's half dead to think what medley's come,
With blended judgments, to pronounce his doom.
'Tis all false fear; for in a mingled pit,
Why, what your grave Don thinks but dully writ,
His neighbour i' th' great wig may take for wit.
Some authors court the few, the wise, if any;
Our youth's content, if he can reach the many,
Who go with much like ends to church and play,
Not to observe what priests or poets say;
No! no! your thoughts, like theirs, lie quite another way.
The ladies safe may smile, for here's no slander,
No smut, no lewd-tongu'd beau, no double entendre.
'Tis true, he has a spark just come from France,
But then so far from beau—why, he talks sense!
Like coin oft carry'd out, but—seldom brought from thence.
There's yet a gang to whom our spark submits,
Your elbow-shaking fool, that lives by's wits,
That's only witty though, just as he lives, by fits.
Who, lion-like, through bailiffs scours away,
Hunts, in the face, a dinner all the day,
At night with empty bowels grumbles o'er the play.
And now the modish 'prentice he implores,
Who, with his master's cash, stol'n out of doors,
Employs it on a brace of—honourable whores:
While their good bulky mother pleas'd, sits by,
Bawd regent of the bubble gallery.
Next to our mounted friends we humbly move,
Who all your side-box tricks are much above,
And never fail to pay us with your love.
Ah, friends! poor Dorset garden-house is gone;
Our merry meetings there are all undone:
Quite lost to us, sure for some strange misdeeds,
That strong dog Sampson's pull'd it o'er our heads,
Snaps rope like thread; but when his fortune's told him,
He'll hear, perhaps, of rope will one day hold him:
At least, I hope, that our good-natur'd town
Will find a way to pull his prices down.

Well, that's all! Now, gentlemen, for the play,
On second thoughts, I've but two words to say,
Such as it is, for your delight design'd,
Hear it, read, try, judge, and speak as you find.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Sir Harry Wildair.
Beau Clincher.
Colonel Standard.
Alderman Smuggler.
Clincher *junior*.
Vizard.
Dicky.
Tom Errand.

WOMEN.

Angelica.
Lady Darling.
Parly.
Lady Lurewell.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Park.*

Enter VIZARD *with a Letter, his Servant following.*

Viz. Angelica send it back unopened! say you?

Serv. As you see, sir.

Viz. The pride of these virtuous women is more insufferable than the immodesty of prostitutes—After all my encouragement, to slight me thus?

Serv. She said, sir, that imagining your morals sincere, she gave you access to her conversation; but that your late behaviour in her company has convinced her that your love and religion are both hypocrisy, and that she believes your letter like yourself, fair on the outside, and foul within: so sent it back unopened.

Viz. May obstinacy guard her beauty till wrinkles bury it; then may desire prevail to make her curse that untimely pride her disappointed age repents!—I'll be revenged the very first opportunity.—Saw you the old Lady Darling, her mother?

Serv. Yes, sir, and she was pleased to say much in your commendation.

Viz. That's my cue—An esteem grafted in old age is hardly rooted out; years stiffen their opinions with their bodies, and old zeal is only to be cozened by young hypocrisy. [*Aside.*] Run to the Lady Lurewell's, and know of her maid whether her ladyship will be at home this evening. Her beauty is sufficient cure for Angelica's scorn.

[*Exit Servant.* VIZARD *pulls out a book, reads, and walks about.*

Enter SMUGGLER.

Smug. Ay, there's a pattern for the young men o' th' times; at his meditation so early; some book of pious ejaculations, I'm sure.

Viz. This Hobbes is an excellent fellow! [*Aside.*] Oh, uncle Smuggler! To find you at this end o' th' town is a miracle.

Smug. I have seen a miracle this morning indeed, cousin Vizard.

Viz. What is it, pray, sir?

Smug. A man at his devotion so near the court—I'm very glad, boy, that you keep your sanctity untainted in this infectious place; the very air of this park is heathenish, and every man's breath I meet scents of atheism.

Viz. Surely, sir, some great concern must bring you to this unsanctified end of the town.

Smug. A very unsanctified concern truly, cousin.

Viz. What is it?

Smug. A law-suit, boy—Shall I tell you?—My ship, the Swan, is newly arrived from St Sebastian, laden with Portugal wines: now the impudent rogue of a tide-waiter has the face to affirm it is French wines in Spanish casks, and has indicted me upon the statute—Oh, conscience! conscience! these tide-waiters and surveyors plague us more with their French wines than the war did with French privateers——Ay, there's another plague of the nation—

Enter Colonel STANDARD.

A red coat and feather.

Viz. Colonel Standard, I'm your humble servant.

Stand. May be not, sir.

Viz. Why so?

Stand. Because——I'm disbanded.

Viz. How! Broke?

Stand. This very morning, in Hyde-Park, my brave regiment, a thousand men, that looked like lions yesterday, were scattered, and looked as poor and simple as the herd of deer that grazed beside them.

Smug. Tal, al, deral. [*Singing.*] I'll have a bonfire this night as high as the monument.

Stand. A bonfire! Thou dry, withered, ill-nature; had not those brave fellows' swords defended you, your house had been a bonfire ere this about your ears.—Did we not venture our lives, sir?

Smug. And did we not pay for your lives, sir? Venture your lives! I'm sure we ventured our money, and that's life and soul to me.——Sir, we'll maintain you no longer.

Stand. Then your wives shall, old Actæon.—There are five-and-thirty strapping officers gone this morning to live upon free quarter in the city.

Smug. Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord! I shall have a son within these nine months, born with a leading-staff in his hand.——Sir, you are———

Stand. What, sir?

Smug. Sir, I say that you are———

Stand. What, sir?

Smug. Disbanded, sir, that's all——I see my lawyer yonder. [*Exit.*

Viz. Sir, I'm very sorry for your misfortune.

Stand. Why so? I don't come to borrow money of you; if you're my friend, meet me this evening at the Rummer; I'll pay my foy, drink a health to my king, prosperity to my country, and away for Hungary to-morrow morning.

Viz. What! you won't leave us?

Stand. What! a soldier stay here, to look like an old pair of colours in Westminster-Hall, ragged and rusty! No, no—I met yesterday a broken lieutenant; he was ashamed to own that he wanted a dinner, but begged eighteen-pence of me to buy a new scabbard for his sword.

Viz. Oh, but you have good friends, colonel!

Stand. Oh, very good friends! My father's a lord, and my elder brother a beau; mighty good friends indeed!

Viz. But your country may perhaps want your sword again.

Stand. Nay, for that matter, let but a single drum beat up for volunteers between Ludgate and Charing-Cross, and I shall undoubtedly hear it at the walls of Buda.

Viz. Come, come, colonel, there are ways of making your fortune at home—Make your addresses to the fair; you're a man of honour and courage.

Stand. Ay, my courage is like to do me wondrous service with the fair. This pretty cross cut over my eye will attract a duchess—I warrant 'twill be a mighty grace to my ogling—Had I used the certain stratagem of a brother colonel of mine, I might succeed.

Viz. What was it, pray?

Stand. Why, to save his pretty face for the women, he always turned his back upon the enemy.—He was a man of honour for the ladies.

Viz. Come, come, the loves of Mars and Venus will never fail; you must get a mistress.

Stand. Pr'ythee, no more on't—You have awakened a thought, from which, and the kingdom, I would have stolen away at once.——To be plain, I have a mistress.

Viz. And she's cruel?

Stand. No.

Viz. Her parents prevent your happiness?

Stand. Not that.

Viz. Then she has no fortune?

Stand. A large one. Beauty to tempt all mankind, and virtue to beat off their assaults. Oh, Vizard! such a creature!

Enter Sir HARRY WILDAIR, *crosses the Stage singing, with Footmen after him.*

Hey-day! Who the devil have we here?

Viz. The joy of the play-house, and life of the Park; Sir Harry Wildair, newly come from Paris.

Stand. Sir Harry Wildair! Did not he make a campaign in Flanders some three or four years ago?

Viz. The same.

Stand. Why, he behaved himself very bravely.

Viz. Why not? Dost think bravery and gaiety are inconsistent? He's a gentleman of most happy circumstances, born to a plentiful estate; has had a genteel and easy education, free from the rigidness of teachers, and pedantry of schools. His florid constitution being never ruffled by misfortune, nor stinted in its pleasures, has rendered him entertaining to others, and easy to himself; turning all passion into gaiety of humour, by which he chooses rather to rejoice with his friends, than be hated by any; as you shall see.

Re-enter WILDAIR.

Wild. Ha, Vizard!

Viz. Sir Harry!

Wild. Who thought to find you out of the Rubric so long? I thought thy hypocrisy had been wedded to a pulpit-cushion long ago.—Sir, if I mistake not your face, your name is Standard?

Stand. Sir Harry, I'm your humble servant.

Wild. Come, gentlemen, the news, the news o' th' town, for I'm just arrived.

Viz. Why, in the city-end o' th' town we're playing the knave, to get estates.

Stand. And in the court-end playing the fool, in spending them.

Wild. Just so in Paris. I'm glad we're grown so modish.

Viz. We are so reformed, that gallantry is taken for vice.

Stand. And hypocrisy for religion.

Wild. A-la-mode de Paris again.

Viz. Not one whore between Ludgate and Aldgate.

Stand. But ten times more cuckolds than ever.

Viz. Nothing like an oath in the city.

Stand. That's a mistake; for my major swore a hundred and fifty last night to a merchant's wife in her bed-chamber.

Wild. Pshaw! this is trifling; tell me news, gentlemen. What lord has lately broke his fortune at the Groom-Porter's? or his heart at Newmarket, for the loss of a race? What wife has been lately suing in Doctor's-Commons for alimony; or what daughter run away with her father's valet? What beau gave the noblest ball at the Bath, or had the finest coach in the ring? I want news, gentlemen.

Stand. Faith, sir, there are no news at all.

Viz. But pray, Sir Harry, tell us some news of your travels.

Wild. With all my heart.—You must know then, I went over to Amsterdam in a Dutch ship: I there had a Dutch whore for five stivers. I went from thence to Landen, where I was heartily drubbed in the battle with the butt-end of a Swiss musket. I thence went to Paris, where I had half a dozen intrigues, bought half a dozen new suits, fought a couple of duels, and here I am again *in statu quo.*

Viz. But we heard that you designed to make the tour of Italy; what brought you back so soon?

Wild. That which brought you into the world, and may perhaps carry you out of it,—a woman.

Stand. What! quit the pleasures of travel for a woman!

Wild. Ay, colonel, for such a woman! I had rather see her *ruelle* than the palace of Lewis le Grand. There's more glory in her smile, than in the jubilee at Rome; and I would rather kiss her hand, than the pope's toe.

Viz. You, colonel, have been very lavish in the beauty and virtue of your mistress; and Sir Harry here has been no less eloquent in the praise of his. Now will I lay you both ten guineas a-piece, that neither of 'em is so pretty, so witty, or so virtuous, as mine.

Stand. 'Tis done.

Wild. I'll double the stakes—But, gentlemen, now I think on't, how shall we be resolved? For I know not where my mistress may be found; she left Paris about a month before me, and I had an account——

Stand. How, sir! left Paris about a month before you?

Wild. Yes, sir, and I had an account that she lodged somewhere in St James's.

Viz. How! somewhere in St James's, say you?

Wild. Ay, sir, but I know not where, and perhaps mayn't find her this fortnight.

Stand. Her name, pray, Sir Harry.

Viz. Ay, ay, her name; perhaps we know her.

Wild. Her name! Ay,—she has the softest, whitest hand that e'er was made of flesh and blood: her lips so balmy sweet——

Stand. But her name, sir.

Wild. Then her neck and breast;——her breasts do so heave, so heave. [*Singing.*

Viz. But her name, sir; her quality.

Wild. Then her shape, colonel!

Stand. But her name I want, sir.

Wild. Then her eyes, Vizard!

Stand. Pshaw, Sir Harry! her name, or nothing.

Wild. Then, if you must have it, she's called the Lady——But then her foot, gentlemen; she dances to a miracle. Vizard, you have certainly lost your wager.

Viz. Why, you have certainly lost your senses; we shall never discover the picture, unless you subscribe the name.

Wild. Then her name is Lurewell.

Stand. 'Sdeath, my mistress. [*Aside.*

Viz. My mistress, by Jupiter. [*Aside.*

Wild. Do you know her, gentlemen?

Stand. I have seen her, sir.

Wild. Canst tell where she lodges? Tell me, dear colonel.

Stand. Your humble servant, sir. [*Exit.*

Wild. Nay, hold, colonel: I'll follow you, and will know. [*Runs out.*

Viz. The Lady Lurewell his mistress! He loves her: but she loves me.——But he's a baronet, and I plain Vizard; he has a coach and six, and I walk on foot; I was bred in London, and he in Paris.——That very circumstance has murdered me.———Then some stratagem must be laid to divert his pretensions.

Re-enter WILDAIR.

Wild. Pry'thee, Dick, what makes the colonel so out of humour?

Viz. Because he's out of pay, I suppose.

Wild. 'Slife, that's true; I was beginning to mistrust some rivalship in the case.

Viz. And suppose there were, you know the colonel can fight, Sir Harry.

Wild. Fight! Pshaw—but he cann't dance, ha!—We contend for a woman, Vizard. 'Slife, man, if ladies were to be gained by sword and pistol only, what the devil should all we beaus do?

Viz. I'll try him farther. [*Aside.*] But would not you, Sir Harry, fight for this woman you so much admire?

Wild. Fight! Let me consider. I love her——that's true;——but then I love honest Sir Harry Wildair better. The Lady Lurewell is divinely charming——right——but then a thrust i' th' guts, or a Middlesex jury, is as ugly as the devil.

Viz. Ay, Sir Harry, 'twere a dangerous cast for a beau-baronet to be tried by a parcel of greasy, grumbling, bartering boobies, who would hang you, purely because you're a gentleman.

Wild. Ay, but on t'other hand, I have money enough to bribe the rogues with: so, upon mature deliberation, I would fight for her.—But no more of her. Pr'ythee, Vizard, cann't you recommend a friend to a pretty mistress by the bye, till I can find my own? You have store, I'm sure; you cunning poaching dogs make surer game than we that hunt open and fair. Pr'ythee now, good Vizard.

Viz. Let me consider a little.—Now love and revenge inspire my politics! [*Aside.*

[*Pauses, whilst Sir* HARRY *walks singing.*

Wild. Pshaw! thou'rt as long studying for a new mistress, as a drawer is piercing a new pipe.

Viz. I design a new pipe for you, and wholesome wine; you'll therefore bear a little expectation.

Wild. Ha! say'st thou, dear Vizard?

Viz. A girl of sixteen, Sir Harry.

Wild. Now sixteen thousand blessings light on thee!

Viz. Pretty and witty.

Wild. Ay, ay, but her name, Vizard.

Viz. Her name! yes——she has the softest whitest hand that e'er was made of flesh and blood; her lips so balmy sweet——

Wild. Well, well, but where shall I find her, man?

Viz. Find her!——but then her foot, Sir Harry; she dances to a miracle.

Wild. Pr'ythee don't distract me.

Viz. Well then, you must know, that this lady is the greatest beauty in town; her name's Angelica: she that passes for her mother is a private bawd, and called the Lady Darling; she goes for a baronet's lady, (no disparagement to your honour, Sir Harry,) I assure you.

Wild. Pshaw, hang my honour! but what street, what house?

Viz. Not so fast, Sir Harry; you must have my passport for your admittance, and you'll find my recommendation in a line or two will procure you very civil entertainment; I suppose twenty or thirty pieces handsomely placed, will gain the point: I'll insure her sound.

Wild. Thou dearest friend to a man in necessity! Here, sirrah, order my coach about to St James's; I'll walk across the Park.

[*To his servant.*

Enter CLINCHER *senior.*

Clin. Here, sirrah, order my coach about to St. James's, I'll walk across the Park too—Mr Vizard, your most devoted—Sir, [*To* WILDAIR] I admire the mode of your shoulder-knot; methinks it hangs very emphatically, and carries an air of travel in it: your sword-knot too is most ornamentally modish, and bears a foreign mien. Gentlemen, my brother is just arrived in town; so that, being upon the wing to kiss his hands, I hope you'll pardon this abrupt departure of, gentlemen, your most devoted, and most faithful humble servant. [*Exit.*

Wild. Pr'ythee, dost know him?

Viz. Know him! why, it is Clincher, who was apprentice to my uncle Smuggler, the merchant in the city.

Wild. What makes him so gay?

Viz. Why, he's in mourning.

Wild. In mourning?

Viz. Yes, for his father. The kind old man in Hertfordshire t'other day broke his neck a fox-hunting; the son upon the news has broke his indentures; whipped from behind the counter into the side-box, forswears merchandise, where he must live by cheating, and usurps gentility, where he may die by raking. He keeps his coach and liveries, brace of geldings, leash of mistresses, talks of nothing but wines, intrigues, plays, fashions, and going to the jubilee.

Wild. Ha, ha, ha! how many pounds of pulvil must the fellow use of sweetening himself from the smell of hops and tobacco? Faugh—I' my conscience, methought, like Olivia's lover, he stunk of Thames street. But now for Angelica; that's her name: we'll to the Prince's chocolate-house, where you shall write my passport. *Allons.* [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Lady* LUREWELL'S *Lodgings.*

Enter LUREWELL, *and her Maid* PARLY.

Lure. Parly, my pocket-book—let me see—Madrid, Paris, Venice, London!—Ay, London! They may talk what they will of the hot countries, but I find love most fruitful under this climate——In a month's space have I gained—let me see,—*imprimis*, Colonel Standard.

Par. And how will your ladyship manage him?

Lure. As all soldiers should be managed; he shall serve me till I gain my ends, then I'll disband him.

Par. But he loves you, madam.

Lure. Therefore I scorn him;
I hate all that don't love me, and slight all that do;
Would his whole deluding sex admir'd me,
Thus would I slight them all.
My virgin and unwary innocence
Was wrong'd by faithless man;
But now, glance eyes, plot brain, dissemble face,
Lie tongue, and be a second Eve to tempt, seduce, and
Plague the treacherous kind.—
Let me survey my captives.—
The colonel leads the van; next Mr Vizard;
He courts me out of the Practice of Piety,
Therefore is a hypocrite;
Then Clincher; he adores me with orangerie,
And is consequently a fool;
Then my old merchant, Alderman Smuggler;
He's a compound of both;—out of which medley of lovers, if I dont make good diversion——
What d'ye think, Parly?

Par. I think, madam, I'm like to be very virtuous in your service, if you teach me all those tricks that you use to your lovers.

Lure. You're a fool, child; observe this, that though a woman swear, forswear, lie, dissemble, back-bite, be proud, vain, malicious, any thing, if she secures the main chance, she's still virtuous; that's a maxim.

Par. I cann't be persuaded though, madam, but that you really loved Sir Harry Wildair in Paris.

Lure. Of all the lovers I ever had, he was my greatest plague, for I could never make him uneasy: I left him involved in a duel upon my account: I long to know whether the fop be killed or not.

Enter STANDARD.

Oh, Lord! no sooner talk of killing, but the soldier is conjured up. You're upon hard duty, colonel, to serve your king, your country, and a mistress too.

Stand. The latter, I must confess, is the hardest; for in war, madam, we can be relieved in our duty; but in love, he who would take our post, is our enemy; emulation in glory is transporting, but rivals here intolerable.

Lure. Those that bear away the prize in the field, should boast the same success in the bed-chamber; and, I think, considering the weakness of our sex, we should make those our companions who can be our champions.

Stand. I once, madam, hoped the honour of defending you from all injuries, through a title to your lovely person, but now my love must attend my fortune. My commission, madam, was my passport to the fair; adding a nobleness to my passion, it stamped a value on my love; 'twas once the life of honour, but now its winding-sheet, and with it must my love be buried.

Par. What! disbanded, colonel?

Stand. Yes, Mrs Parly.

Par. Faugh, the nauseous fellow! he stinks of poverty already. [*Aside.*

Lure. His misfortune troubles me, because it may prevent my designs. [*Aside.*

Stand. I'll choose, madam, rather to destroy my passion by absence abroad, than have it starved at home.

Lure. I'm sorry, sir, you have so mean an opinion of my affection, as to imagine it founded upon your fortune. And, to convince you of your mistake, here I vow, by all that's sacred, I own the same affection now as before. Let it suffice, my fortune is considerable.

Stand. No, madam, no; I'll never be a charge

to her I love! The man that sells himself for gold, is the worst of prostitutes.

Lure. Now, were he any other creature but a man, I could love him. [*Aside.*

Stand. This only last request I make, that no title recommend a fool, no office introduce a knave, nor coat a coward, to my place in your affections; so farewell my country, and adieu my love. [*Exit.*

Lure. Now the devil take thee for being so honourable! here, Parly, call him back, I shall lose half my diversion else. Now for a trial of skill.

Re-enter STANDARD.

Sir, I hope you'll pardon my curiosity. When do you take your journey?

Stand. To-morrow morning, early, madam.

Lure. So suddenly! which way are you designed to travel?

Stand. That I cann't yet resolve on.

Lure. Pray, sir, tell me; pray, sir; I entreat you; why are you so obstinate?

Stand. Why are you so curious, madam?

Lure. Because—

Stand. What?

Lure. Because, I, I—

Stand. Because! What, madam?—Pray, tell me.

Lure. Because I design to follow you. [*Crying.*

Stand. Follow me! By all that's great I ne'er was proud before. But such love from such a creature might swell the vanity of the proudest prince. Follow me! By heavens thou shalt not. What! expose thee to the hazards of a camp!—Rather I'll stay, and here bear the contempt of fools, and worst of fortune.

Lure. You need not, shall not; my estate for both is sufficient.

Stand. Thy estate! No, I'll turn a knave, and purchase one myself; I'll cringe to the proud man I undermine, and fawn on him that I would bite to death; I'll tip my tongue with flattery, and smooth my face with smiles; I'll turn pimp, informer, office-broker, nay, coward, to be great; and sacrifice it all to thee, my generous fair.

Lure. And I'll dissemble, lie, swear, jilt, any thing, but I'll reward thy love, and recompense thy noble passion.

Stand. Sir Harry, ha, ha, ha! poor Sir Harry, ha, ha, ha! Rather kiss her hand than the pope's toe, ha, ha, ha!

Lure. What Sir Harry, colonel? What Sir Harry?

Stand. Sir Harry Wildair, madam.

Lure. What! is he come over?

Stand. Ay, and he told me——but I don't believe a syllable on't.

Lure. What did he tell you?

Stand. Only called you his mistress, and pretending to be extravagant in your commendation, would vainly insinuate the praise of his own judgment and good fortune in a choice.

Lure. How easily is the vanity of fops tickled by our sex!

Stand. Why, your sex is the vanity of fops.

Lure. On my conscience, I believe so. This gentleman, because he danced well, I pitched on for a partner at a ball in Paris, and ever since he has so persecuted me with letters, songs, dances, serenading, flattery, foppery, and noise, that I was forced to fly the kingdom—And I warrant you he made you jealous.

Stand. Faith, madam, I was a little uneasy.

Lure. You shall have a plentiful revenge; I'll send him back all his foolish letters, songs, and verses, and you yourself shall carry them: 'twill afford you opportunity of triumphing, and free me from his further impertinence; for of all men he's my aversion. I'll run and fetch them instantly. [*Exit.*

Stand. Dear madam, a rare project! Now shall I bait him, like Actæon, with his own dogs.—— Well, Mrs Parly, it is ordered by act of parliament, that you receive no more pieces, Mrs Parly.

Par. 'Tis provided by the same act, that you send no more messages by me, good colonel; you must not presume to send any more letters, unless you can pay the postage.

Stand. Come, come, don't be mercenary; take example by your lady, be honourable.

Par. A-lack-a-day, sir, it shews as ridiculous and haughty for us to imitate our betters in their honour, as in their finery: leave honour to nobility that can support it: we poor folks, colonel, have no pretence to't; and truly, I think, sir, that your honour should be cashiered with your leading-staff.

Stand. 'Tis one of the greatest curses of poverty to be the jest of chambermaids!

Enter LUREWELL.

Lure. Here's the packet, colonel: the whole magazine of love's artillery. [*Gives him the packet.*

Stand. Which, since I have gained, I will turn upon the enemy. Madam, I'll bring you the news of my victory this evening. Poor Sir Harry, ha, ha, ha! [*Exit.*

Lure. To the right about, as you were; march, colonel. Ha, ha, ha!

Vain man, who boasts of studied parts and wiles!
Nature in us, your deepest art beguiles,
Stamping deep cunning in our frowns and smiles.
You toil for art, your intellects you trace;
Woman, without a thought, bears policy in her face. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—CLINCHER *junior's Lodgings.*

Enter CLINCHER, *opening a Letter; Servant following.*

Clin. [*Reads.*] "Dear brother,

"I will see you presently: I have sent this lad to wait on you; he can instruct you in the fashions of the town. I am your affectionate brother, Clincher." Very well, and what's your name, sir?

Dick. My name is Dicky, sir.

Clin. Dicky!

Dick. Ay, Dicky, sir.

Clin. Very well; a pretty name! And what can you do, Mr Dicky?

Dick. Why, sir, I can powder a wig, and pick up a whore.

Clin. Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord! a whore! Why, are there many whores in this town?

Dick. Ha, ha, ha! many whores! there's a question, indeed! Why, sir, there are above five hundred surgeons in town.——Hark'ee, sir; do you see that woman there, in the velvet scarf, and red knots?

Clin. Ay, sir; what then?

Dick. Why, she shall be at your service in three minutes, as I'm a pimp.

Clin. Oh, Jupiter Ammon! Why, she's a gentlewoman.

Dick. A gentlewoman! Why so are all the whores in town, sir.

Enter CLINCHER *senior.*

Clin. sen. Brother, you're welcome to London.

Clin. jun. I thought, brother, you owed so much to the memory of my father, as to wear mourning for his death.

Clin. sen. Why, so I do, fool; I wear this, because I have the estate, and you wear that, because you have not the estate. You have cause to mourn, indeed, brother. Well, brother, I'm glad to see you: fare you well. [*Going.*

Clin. jun. Stay, stay, brother——Where are you going?

Clin. sen. How natural 'tis for a country booby to ask impertinent questions!—Hark'e, sir; is not my father dead?

Clin. jun. Ay, ay, to my sorrow.

Clin. sen. No matter for that, he's dead; and am not I a young, powdered, extravagant English heir?

Clin. jun. Very right, sir.

Clin. sen. Why then, sir, you may be sure that I am going to the jubilee, sir.

Clin. jun. Jubilee! What's that?

Clin. sen. Jubilee! Why, the jubilee is——Faith I don't know what it is.

Dick. Why, the jubilee is the same thing as our lord mayor's day in the city; there will be pageants, and squibs, and raree-shows, and all that, sir.

Clin. jun. And must you go so soon, brother?

Clin. sen. Yes, sir, for I must stay a month at Amsterdam to study poetry.

Clin. jun. Then I suppose, brother, you travel through Muscovy to learn fashions; don't you, brother?

Clin. sen. Brother! Pr'ythee, Robin, don't call me brother; sir will do every jot as well.

Clin. jun. Oh, Jupiter Ammon! why so?

Clin. sen. Because people will imagine you have a spite at me—But have you seen your cousin Angelica yet, and her mother the Lady Darling?

Clin. jun. No; my dancing-master has not been with me yet. How shall I salute them, brother?

Clin. sen. Pshaw! that's easy; 'tis only two scrapes, a kiss, and your humble servant. I'll tell you more when I come from the jubilee. Come along. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Lady* DARLING'S *House.*

Enter WILDAIR *with a Letter.*

Wild. Like light and heat, incorporate we lay;
We bless'd the night, and curs'd the coming day.
Well, if this paper kite flies sure, I'm secure of my game——Humph!—the prettiest *bourdel* I have seen; a very stately genteel one———

Footmen cross the stage.

Hey-day! equipage too! Now for a bawd by the curtesy, and a whore with a coat of arms———'Sdeath, I'm afraid I've mistaken the house!

Enter Lady DARLING.

No, this must be the bawd, by her bulk.

Darl. Your business, pray, sir?

Wild. Pleasure, madam.

Darl. Then, sir, you have no business here.

Wild. This letter, madam, will inform you arther; Mr Vizard sent it, with his humble service to your ladyship.

Darl. How does my cousin, sir?

Wild. Ay, her cousin too! that's right procuress again. [*Aside.*

Darl. [*Reads.*] "Madam——Earnest inclination to serve——Sir Harry———Madam——court my cousin——Gentleman——fortune——Your ladyship's most humble servant, Vizard." Sir, your fortune and quality are sufficient to recommend you any where; but what goes farther with me, is the recommendation of so sober and pious a young gentleman as my cousin Vizard.

Wild. A right sanctified bawd, o' my word! [*Aside.*

Darl. Sir Harry, your conversation with Mr Vizard argues you a gentleman, free from the loose and vicious carriage of the town. I shall therefore call my daughter. [*Exit.*

Wild. Now go thy way for an illustrious bawd of Babylon—She dresses up a sin so religiously, that the devil would hardly know it of his making.

Re-enter DARLING *with* ANGELICA.

Darl. Pray, daughter, use him civilly; such matches don't offer every day.

[*Exit* DARL.

Wild. Oh, all ye powers of love! an angel! 'Sdeath, what money have I got in my pocket? I cann't offer her less than twenty guineas——and, by Jupiter, she's worth a hundred.

Ang. 'Tis he! the very same! and his person as agreeable as his character of good humour ——Pray Heaven his silence proceed from respect!

Wild. How innocent she looks! How would that modesty adorn virtue, when it makes even vice look so charming!——By Heaven, there's such a commanding innocence in her looks, that I dare not ask the question!

Ang. Now, all the charms of real love and feigned indifference assist me to engage his heart; for mine is lost already.

Wild. Madam—I, I——Zoons, I cannot speak to her! But she's a whore, and I will———Madam, in short, I, I———Oh, hypocrisy, hypocrisy, what a charming sin art thou!

Ang. He is caught; now to secure my conquest—I thought, sir, you had business to communicate.

Wild. Business to communicate! How nicely she words it!——Yes, madam, I have a little business to communicate. Don't you love singing-birds, madam?

Ang. That's an odd question for a lover—Yes, sir.

Wild. Why, then, madam, here is a nest of the prettiest goldfinches that ever chirp'd in a cage; twenty young ones, I assure you, madam.

Ang. Twenty young ones! What then, sir?

Wild. Why, then, madam, there are—twenty young ones——'Slife, I think twenty is pretty fair.

Ang. He's mad, sure!——Sir Harry, when you have learned more wit and manners, you shall be welcome here again. [*Exit.*

Wild. Wit and manners! 'Egad, now, I conceive there is a great deal of wit and manners in twenty guineas—I'm sure 'tis all the wit and manners I have about me at present. What shall I do?

Enter CLINCHER *Junior and* DICKY.

What the devil's here? Another cousin, I warrant ye!—Hark'e, sir, can you lend me ten or a dozen guineas instantly? I'll pay you fifteen for them in three hours, upon my honour.

Clin. jun. These London sparks are plaguy impudent! This fellow, by his wig and assurance, can be no less than a courtier.

Dick. He's rather a courtier by his borrowing.

Clin. jun. Faith, sir, I han't above five guineas about me.

Wild. What business have you here then, sir? For, to my knowledge, twenty won't be sufficient.

Clin. jun. Sufficient! For what, sir?

Wild. What, sir! Why, for that, sir; what the devil should it be, sir? I know your business, notwithstanding all your gravity, sir.

Clin. jun. My business? Why, my cousin lives here.

Wild. I know your cousin does live here, and Vizard's cousin, and every body's cousin——Hark'e, sir, I shall return immediately; and if you offer to touch her till I come back, I shall cut your throat, rascal. [*Exit.*

Clin. jun. Why, the man's mad, sure!

Dick. Mad, sir! Ay——Why, he's a beau.

Clin. jun. A beau! What's that? Are all madmen beaux?

Dick. No, sir; but most beaux are madmen. But now for your cousin. Remember your three scrapes, a kiss, and your humble servant.

[*Exeunt, as into the house.*

Enter WILDAIR, STANDARD *following.*

Stand. Sir Harry, Sir Harry!

Wild. I am in haste, colonel; besides, if you're in no better humour than when I parted with you in the Park this morning, your company won't be very agreeable.

Stand. You're a happy man, Sir Harry, who are never out of humour. Can nothing move your gall, Sir Harry?

Wild. Nothing but impossibilities, which are the same as nothing.

Stand. What impossibilities?

Wild. The resurrection of my father to disinherit me, or an act of parliament against wenching. A man of eight thousand pounds per annum to be vex'd! No, no; anger and spleen are companions for younger brothers.

Stand. Suppose one called you a son of a whore behind your back?

Wild. Why, then would I call him rascal behind his back; so we're even.

Stand. But suppose you had lost a mistress?

Wild. Why, then I would get another.

Stand. But suppose you were discarded by the woman you love, that would surely trouble you?

Wild. You're mistaken, colonel; my love is neither romantically honourable, nor meanly mercenary; 'tis only a pitch of gratitude; while she loves me, I love her; when she desists, the obligation's void.

Stand. But to be mistaken in your opinion, sir; if the Lady Lurewell (only suppose it) had discarded you—I say, only suppose it——and had sent your discharge by me?

Wild. Pshaw! that's another impossibility.

Stand. Are you sure of that?

Wild. Why, 'twere a solecism in nature. Why,

she's a rib of me, sir. She dances with me, sings with me, plays with me, swears with me, lies with me.

Stand. How, sir?

Wild. I mean in an honourable way; that is, she lies for me. In short, we are as like one another as a couple of guineas.

Stand. Now that I have raised you to the highest pinnacle of vanity, will I give you so mortifying a fall, as shall dash your hopes to pieces.—I pray your honour to peruse these papers.

[*Gives him the packet.*

Wild. What is't, the muster-roll of your regiment, colonel?

Stand. No, no, 'tis a list of your forces in your last love campaign; and, for your comfort, all disbanded.

Wild. Pr'ythee, good metaphorical colonel, what d'ye mean?

Stand. Read, sir, read; these are the sibyl's leaves, that will unfold your destiny.

Wild. So it be not a false deed, to cheat me of my estate, what care I—[*Opening the packet.*] Humph! my hand! To the Lady Lurewell—To the Lady Lurewell—To the Lady Lurewell—What the devil hast thou been tampering with, to conjure up these spirits?

Stand. A certain familiar of your acquaintance, sir. Read, read.

Wild. [*Reading.*]—'Madam, my passion——so natural——your beauty contending——force of charms——mankind——eternal admirer, Wildair.'—I ne'er was ashamed of my name before.

Stand. What, Sir Harry Wildair out of humour! ha, ha, ha! Poor Sir Harry! More glory in her smile than in the jubilee at Rome! ha, ha, ha! But then her foot, Sir Harry; she dances to a miracle! ha, ha, ha! Fie, Sir Harry, a man of your parts write letters not worth keeping! What sayest thou, my dear knight-errant? ha, ha, ha! you may seek adventures now indeed.

Wild. [*Sings.*] No, no, let her wander, &c.

Stand. You are jilted to some tune, sir; blown up with false music, that's all.

Wild. Now, why should I be angry that a woman is a woman? Since inconstancy and falsehood are grounded in their natures, how can they help it?

Stand. Then they must be grounded in your nature; for she's a rib of you, Sir Harry.

Wild. Here's a copy of verses too: I must turn poet, in the devil's name—Stay—'Sdeath, what's here?—This is her hand——Oh, the charming characters!—[*Reading.*]—'My dear Wildair,'—That's I, 'egad! 'This huff-bluff colonel'—that's he—'is the rarest fool in nature,'—the devil he is!—'and as such have I used him.'—with all my heart, faith—'I had no better way of letting you know that I lodge in St. James's, near the Holy Lamb. Lurewell.'——Colonel, I am your most humble servant.

Stand. Hold, sir, you sha'n't go yet; I ha'n't delivered half my message.

Wild. Upon my faith but you have, colonel.

Stand. Well, well, own your spleen; out with it; I know you are like to burst.

Wild. I am so, 'egad! ha, ha, ha!

[*Laugh and point at one another.*

Stand. Ay, with all my heart! ha, ha! Well, well, that's forced, Sir Harry.

Wild. I was never better pleas'd in all my life, by Jupiter.

Stand. Well, Sir Harry, 'tis prudence to hide your concern, when there's no help for it. But, to be serious, now; the lady has sent you back all your papers there———I was so just as not to look upon them.

Wild. I'm glad on't, sir; for there were some things that I would not have you see.

Stand. All this she has done for my sake, and I desire you would decline any further pretensions for your own sake. So, honest, good-natured Sir Harry, I'm your humble servant. [*Exit.*

Wild. Ha, ha, ha! poor colonel! Oh, the delight of an ingenious mistress! What a life and briskness it adds to an amour, like the loves of mighty Jove, still suing in different shapes. A leger-de-main mistress, who, *presto! pass!* and she's vanish'd; then *hey!* in an instant in your arms again. [*Going.*

Enter VIZARD.

Viz. Well met, Sir Harry—What news from the island of love?

Wild. Faith, we made but a broken voyage by your chart; but now I am bound for another port: I told you the colonel was my rival.

Viz. The colonel—curs'd misfortune! another. [*Aside.*

Wild. But the civilest in the world: he brought me word where my mistress lodges. The story's too long to tell you now, for I must fly.

Viz. What, have you given over all thoughts of Angelica?

Wild. No, no, I'll think of her some other time. But now for the Lady Lurewell. Wit and beauty calls.

That mistress ne'er can pall her lover's joys,
Whose wit can whet, whene'er her beauty cloys.
Her little amorous frauds all truths excel,
And make us happy, being deceiv'd so well.

[*Exit.*

Viz. The colonel my rival too!——How shall I manage? There is but one way———him and the knight will I set a tilting, where one cuts t'other's throat, and the survivor's hang'd: so there will be two rivals pretty decently disposed of. Since honour may oblige them to play the fool, why should not necessity engage me to play the knave? [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Lady* LUREWELL's *Lodgings.*

Enter LUREWELL *and* PARLY.

Lure. Has my servant brought me the money from my merchant?

Par. No, madam: he met Alderman Smuggler at Charing-Cross, who has promised to wait on you himself immediately.

Lure. 'Tis odd that this old rogue should pre-

tend to love me, and at the same time cheat me of my money.

Par. 'Tis well, madam, if he don't cheat you of your estate; for you say the writings are in his hands.

Lure. But what satisfaction can I get of him? ——Oh, here he comes!

Enter SMUGGLER.

Mr Alderman, your servant; have you brought me any money, sir?

Smug. Faith, madam, trading is very dead; what with paying the taxes, raising the customs, losses at sea abroad, and maintaining our wives at home, the bank is reduced very low.

Lure. Come, come, sir, these evasions won't serve your turn; I must have money, sir—I hope you don't design to cheat me?

Smug. Cheat you, madam!—have a care what you say: I am an alderman, madam——Cheat you, madam! I have been an honest citizen these five-and-thirty years.

Lure. An honest citizen! Bear witness, Parly —I shall trap him in more lies presently. Come, sir, tho' I am a woman, I can take a course.

Smug. What course, madam? You'll go to law, will ye? I can maintain a suit of law, be it right or wrong, these forty years, I am sure of that, thanks to the honest practice of the courts.

Lure. Sir, I'll blast your reputation, and so ruin your credit.

Smug. Blast my reputation! he, he, he! Why, I'm a religious man, madam; I have been very instrumental in the reformation of manners. Ruin my credit! Ah, poor woman! There is but one way, madam——you have a sweet leering eye.

Lure. You instrumental in the reformation! How?

Smug. I whipp'd all the whores, cut and long-tail, out of the parish—Ah, that leering eye!—Then I voted for pulling down the playhouse—Ah, that ogle, that ogle!—Then my own pious example—Ah, that lip, that lip!

Lure. Here's a religious rogue for you, now! —As I hope to be saved, I have a good mind to beat the old monster.

Smug. Madam, I have brought you about a hundred and fifty guineas (a great deal of money, as times go) and———

Lure. Come, give 'em me.

Smug. Ah, that hand, that hand! that pretty, soft, white——I have brought it, you see; but the conditions of the obligation are such, that whereas that leering eye, that pouting lip, that pretty soft hand, that—you understand me; you understand; I'm sure you do, you little rogue.——

Lure. Here's a villain, now, so covetous, that he won't wench upon his own cost, but would bribe me with my own money! I'll be revenged. [*Aside.*]—Upon my word, Mr Alderman, you make me blush,—what d'ye mean, pray?

Smug. See here, madam. [*Puts a piece of money in his mouth.*] Buss and guinea, buss and guinea, buss and guinea.

Lure. Well, Mr Alderman, you have such pretty winning ways, that I will! ha, ha, ha!

Smug. Will you indeed! he, he, he! my little coquet? And when, and where, and how?

Lure. 'Twill be a difficult point, sir, to secure both our honours; you must therefore be disguised, Mr Alderman.

Smug. Pshaw! no matter; I am an old fornicator; I'm not half so religious as I seem to be. You little rogue, why, I'm disguised as I am; our sanctity is all outside, all hypocrisy.

Lure. No man is seen to come into this house after night-fall; you must therefore sneak in, when 'tis dark, in woman's clothes.

Smug. With all my heart——I have a suit on purpose, my little coquet; I love to be disguised; 'ecod, I make a very handsome woman, 'ecod I do.

Enter Servant, who whispers LUREWELL.

Lure. Oh, Mr Alderman, shall I beg you to walk into the next room? Here are some strangers coming up.

Smug. Buss and guinea first—Ah, my little coquet! [*Exit.*

Enter WILDAIR.

Wild. My life, my soul, my all that Heaven can give!

Lure. Death's life with thee, without thee death to live.

Welcome, my dear Sir Harry———I see you got my directions.

Wild. Directions! in the most charming manner, thou dear Machiavel of intrigue.

Lure. Still brisk and airy, I find, Sir Harry.

Wild. The sight of you, madam, exalts my air, and makes joy lighten in my face.

Lure. I have a thousand questions to ask you, Sir Harry. How d'ye like France?

Wild. Ah! *c'est le plus beau païs du monde.*

Lure. Then what made you leave it so soon?

Wild. Madam, *vous voyez que je vous suive partout.*

Lure. Oh, *monsieur, je vous suis fort obligée* ——But, where's the court now?

Wild. At Marli, madam.

Lure. And where my Count La Valier?

Wild. His body's in the church of Nôtre Dame; I don't know where his soul is.

Lure. What disease did he die of?

Wild. A duel, madam; I was his doctor.

Lure. How d'ye mean?

Wild. As most doctors do; I kill'd him.

Lure. *En cavalier*, my dear knight-errant—Well, and how, and how: what intrigues, what gallantries are carrying on in the *beau monde?*

Wild. I should ask you that question, madam since your ladyship makes the *beau monde* wherever you come.

Lure. Ah, Sir Harry, I've been almost ruined, pestered to death here, by the incessant attacks of a mighty colonel; he has besieged me as close as our army did Namur.

Wild. I hope your ladyship did not surrender, though.

Lure. No, no; but was forced to capitulate.

But since you are come to raise the siege, we'll dance, and sing, and laugh——

Wild. And love and kiss——*Montrez moi votre chambre?*

Lure. *Attends, attends, un peu*——I remember, Sir Harry, you promised me, in Paris, never to ask that impertinent question again.

Wild. Pshaw, madam! that was above two months ago: besides, madam, treaties made in France are never kept.

Lure. Would you marry me, Sir Harry?

Wild. Oh! *la marriage est un grand mal*—But I will marry you.

Lure. Your word, sir, is not to be relied on; if a gentleman will forfeit his honour in dealings of business, we may reasonably suspect his fidelity in an amour.

Wild. My honour in dealings of business! Why, madam, I never had any business in all my life.

Lure. Yes, Sir Harry, I have heard a very odd story, and am sorry that a gentleman of your figure should undergo the scandal.

Wild. Out with it, madam.

Lure. Why, the merchant, sir, that transmitted your bills of exchange to you in France, complains of some indirect and dishonourable dealings.

Wild. Who, old Smuggler?

Lure. Ay, ay, you know him, I find.

Wild. I have some reason, I think; why, the rogue has cheated me of above five hundred pounds within these three years.

Lure. 'Tis your business then to acquit yourself publicly; for he spreads the scandal every where.

Wild. Acquit myself publicly!—Here, sirrah, my coach; I'll drive instantly into the city, and cane the old villain round the Royal Exchange; he shall run the gauntlet through a thousand brush'd beavers, and formal cravats.

Lure. Why, he is in the house now, sir.

Wild. What, in this house?

Lure. Ay, in the next room.

Wild. Then, sirrah, lend me your cudgel.

Lure. Sir Harry, you won't raise a disturbance in my house?

Wild. Disturbance, madam! no, no, I'll beat him with the temper of a philosopher. Here, Mrs Parly, shew me the gentleman.

[*Exit with* PARLY.

Lure. Now shall I get the old monster well beaten, and Sir Harry pestered next term with bloodsheds, batteries, costs and damages, solicitors and attornies; and if they don't tease him out of his good humour, I'll never plot again. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*Changes to another Room in the same House.*

Enter SMUGGLER.

Smug. Oh, this damn'd tide-waiter! A ship and cargo worth five thousand pounds! Why, 'tis richly worth five hundred perjuries.

Enter WILDAIR.

Wild. Dear Mr Alderman, I'm your most devoted and humble servant.

Smug. My best friend, Sir Harry, you're welcome to England.

Wild. I'll assure you, sir, there's not a man in the king's dominions I am gladder to meet, dear, dear Mr Alderman. [*Bowing very low.*

Smug. Oh, Lord, sir, you travellers have the most obliging ways with you!

Wild. There is a business, Mr Alderman, fallen out, which you may oblige me infinitely by—I am very sorry that I am forced to be troublesome; but necessity, Mr Alderman—

Smug. Ay, sir, as you say, necessity——But, upon my word, sir, I am very short of money at present; but—

Wild. That's not the matter, sir; I'm above an obligation that way: but the business is, I'm reduced to an indespensible necessity of being obliged to you for a beating——Here, take this cudgel.

Smug. A beating, Sir Harry! ha, ha, ha! I beat a knight baronet! an alderman turn cudgel-player—Ha, ha, ha!

Wild. Upon my word, sir, you must beat me, or I cudgel you; take your choice.

Smug. Pshaw, pshaw! you jest.

Wild. Nay, 'tis sure as fate—So, Alderman, I hope you'll pardon my curiosity. [*Strikes him.*

Smug. Curiosity! Deuce take your curiosity, sir!—What d'ye mean?

Wild. Nothing at all; I'm but in jest, sir.

Smug. Oh, I can take any thing in jest! but a man might imagine, by the smartness of the stroke, that you were in downright earnest.

Wild. Not in the least, sir; [*strikes him*] not in the least, indeed, sir.

Smug. Pray, good sir, no more of your jests; for they are the bluntest jests that ever I knew.

Wild. [*Strikes.*] I heartily beg your pardon with all my heart, sir.

Smug. Pardon, sir! Well, sir, that is satisfaction enough from a gentleman. But, seriously, now, if you pass any more of your jests upon me, I shall grow angry.

Wild. I humbly beg your permission to break one or two more. [*Strikes him.*

Smug. Oh, Lord, sir, you'll break my bones! Are you mad, sir! Murder, felony, manslaughter! [WILDAIR *knocks him down.*

Wild. Sir, I beg you ten thousand pardons; but I am absolutely compelled to it, upon my honour, sir: nothing can be more averse to my inclinations, than to jest with my honest, dear, loving, obliging friend the Alderman.

[*Striking him all this while:* SMUGGLER *tumbles over and over, and shakes out his pocket-book on the floor;* LUREWELL *enters, and takes it up.*]

Lure. The old rogue's pocket-book; this may be of use. [*Aside.*] Oh, Lord, Sir Harry's murdering the poor old man!

Smug. Oh, dear madam, I was beaten in jest, till I am murdered in good earnest.

Lure. Well, well, I'll bring you off, Senior—*Frappez, frappez!*

Smug. Oh, for charity's sake, madam, rescue a poor citizen!

Lure. Oh, you barbarous man!——Hold, hold! *Frappez, plus rudement ! Frappez !*— I wonder you are not ashamed. [*Holding* WILD.] A poor, reverend, honest elder—[*Helps* SMUG. *up.*] It makes me weep to see him in this condition, poor man!—Now, the devil take you, Sir Harry—for not beating him harder——Well, my dear, you shall come at night, and I'll make you amends.

[*Here Sir* HARRY *takes snuff.*

Smug. Madam, I will have amends before I leave the place——Sir, how durst you use me thus?

Wild. Sir?

Smug. Sir, I say that I will have satisfaction.

Wild. With all my heart.

[*Throws snuff into his eyes.*

Smug. Oh, murder, blindness, fire! Oh, madam, madam, get me some water. Water, fire, fire, water! [*Exit with* LUREWELL.

Wild. How pleasant is resenting an injury without passion! 'Tis the beauty of revenge.

Let statesmen plot, and under business groan,
And settling public quiet, lose their own;
Let soldiers drudge and fight for pay or fame,
For when they're shot, I think 'tis much the same;
Let scholars vex their brains with mood and tense,
And, mad with strength of reason, fools commence,
Losing their wits in searching after sense;
Their *summum bonum* they must toil to gain,
And, seeking pleasure, spend their life in pain.
I make the most of life, no hour mispend;
Pleasure's the mean, and pleasure is my end.
No spleen, no trouble shall my time destroy;
Life's but a span, I'll ev'ry inch enjoy. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Street.*

Enter STANDARD *and* VIZARD.

Stand. I bring him word where she lodged? I the civilest rival in the world? 'Tis impossible.

Viz. I shall urge it no farther, sir. I only thought, sir, that my character in the world might add authority to my words, without so many repetitions.

Stand. Pardon me, dear Vizard. Our belief struggles hard before it can be brought to yield to the disadvantage of what we love; 'tis so great an abuse to our judgment, that it makes the faults of our choice our own failing. But what said Sir Harry?

Viz. He pitied the poor credulous colonel, laughed heartily, flew away, with all the raptures of a bridegroom, repeating these lines:

A mistress ne'er can pall her lover's joys,
Whose wit can whet, whene'er her beauty cloys.

Stand. A mistress ne'er can pall! By all my wrongs, he whores her, and I am made their property.——Vengeance——Vizard, you must carry a note for me to Sir Harry.

Viz. What, a challenge? I hope you don't design to fight.

Stand. What, wear the livery of my king, and pocket an affront? 'Twere an abuse to his sacred Majesty: a soldier's sword, Vizard, should start of itself to redress its master's wrong.

Viz. However, sir, I think it not proper for me to carry any such message between friends.

Stand. I have ne'er a servant here; what shall I do?

Viz. There's Tom Errand, the porter that plies at the Blue Posts, one who knows Sir Harry and his haunts very well; you may send a note by him.

Stand. Here, you, friend.

Viz. I have now some business, and must take my leave; I would advise you, nevertheless, against this affair.

Stand. No whispering now, nor telling of friends to prevent us. He that disappoints a man of an honourable revenge, may love him foolishly like a wife, but never value him as a friend.

Viz. Nay, the devil take him that parts you, say I. [*Exit.*

Enter Porter, running.

Er. Did your honour call porter?

Stand. Is your name Tom Errand?

Er. People call me so, an't like your worship.

Stand. D'ye know Sir Harry Wildair?

Er. Ay, very well, sir; he's one of my best masters; many a round half-crown have I had of his worship; he's newly come home from France, sir.

Stand. Go to the next coffee-house, and wait for me.——Oh, woman, woman! how bless'd is man when favoured by your smiles, and how accurs'd when all those smiles are found but wanton baits to sooth us to destruction!

Thus our chief joys with base allays are curs'd,
And our best things, when once corrupted, worst. [*Exeunt.*

Enter WILDAIR, *and* CLINCHER *Senior following.*

Clin. sen. Sir, sir, sir, having some business of importance to communicate to you, I would beg your attention to a trifling affair that I would impart to your understanding.

Wild. What is your trifling business of importance, pray, sweet sir?

Clin. sen. Pray, sir, are the roads deep between this and Paris.

Wild. Why that question, sir?

Clin. sen. Because I design to go to the jubilee, sir. I understand that you are a traveller, sir; there is an air of travel in the tie of your cravat, sir; there is indeed, sir———I suppose, sir, you bought this lace in Flanders.

Wild. No, sir, this lace was made in Norway.

Clin. sen. Norway, sir?

Wild. Yes, sir, of the shavings of deal-boards.

Clin. sen. That's very strange now, faith——Lace made of the shavings of deal-boards! 'Egad, sir, you travellers see very strange things abroad, very incredible things abroad, indeed. Well, I'll have a cravat of the very same lace before I come home.

Wild. But, sir, what preparations have you made for your journey?

Clin. sen. A case of pocket-pistols for the bravoes, and a swimming-girdle.

Wild. Why these, sir?

Clin. sen. Oh, Lord, sir, I'll tell you——Suppose us in Rome, now; away goes I to some ball—for I'll be a mighty beau. Then, as I said, I go to some ball, or some bear-baiting—'tis all one, you know——then comes a fine Italian *bona roba*, and plucks me by the sleeve: Signior Angle, Signior Angle—She's a very fine lady, observe that—Signior Angle, says she—Signora, says I; and trips after her to the corner of a street,—suppose it Russel-street, here, or any other street; then, you know, I must invite her to the tavern; I can do no less——Then up comes her bravo; the Italian grows saucy, and I give him an English dowse o' the face: I can box, sir, box tightly; I was a 'prentice, sir——But then, sir, he whips out his stiletto, and I whips out my bull-dog—slaps him through, trips down stairs, turns the corner of Russel-street again, and whips me into the ambassador's train, and there I'm safe as a beau behind the scenes.

Wild. Is your pistol charg'd, sir?

Clin. sen. Only a brace of bullets, that's all, sir.

Wild. 'Tis a very fine pistol, truly; pray let me see it.

Clin. sen. With all my heart, sir.

Wild. Hark'e, Mr Jubilee, can you digest a brace of bullets?

Clin. sen. Oh, by no means in the world, sir.

Wild. I'll try the strength of your stomach, however. Sir, you're a dead man.

[*Presenting the pistol to his breast.*

Clin. sen. Consider, dear sir, I am going to the jubilee: when I come home again, I am a dead man at your service.

Wild. Oh, very well, sir; but take heed you are not so choleric for the future.

Clin. sen. Choleric, sir! Oons, I design to shoot seven Italians in a week, sir.

Wild. Sir, you won't have provocation.

Clin. sen. Provocation, sir! Zauns, sir, I'll kill any man for treading upon my corns; and there will be a devilish throng of people there: they say that all the princes of Italy will be there.

Wild. And all the fops and fiddlers in Europe——But the use of your swimming-girdle, pray, sir?

Clin. sen. Oh, Lord, sir, that's easy. Suppose the ship cast away; now, whilst other foolish people are busy at their prayers, I whip on my swimming-girdle, clap a month's provision in my pocket, and sails me away, like an egg in a duck's belly—And hark'e, sir, I have a new project in my head: where dy'e think my swimming-girdle shall carry me upon this occasion? 'Tis a new project.

Wild. Where, sir?

Clin. sen. To Civita Vecchia, faith and troth, and so save the charges of my passage. Well, sir, you must pardon me now; I am going to see my mistress. [*Exit.*

Wild. This fellow's an accomplish'd ass before he goes abroad. Well, this Angelica has got into my heart, and I cann't get her out of my head. I must pay her t'other visit. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Lady* DARLING'S *House.*

Enter ANGELICA.

Ang. Unhappy state of woman! whose chief virtue is but ceremony, and our much boasted modesty but a slavish restraint. The strict confinement on our words, makes our thoughts ramble more; and what preserves our outward fame, destroys our inward quiet. 'Tis hard that love should be denied the privilege of hatred; that scandal and detraction should be so much indulged, yet sacred love and truth debarred our conversation.

Enter DARLING, CLINCHER *Junior, and* DICKY.

Darl. This is my daughter, cousin.

Dick. Now, sir, remember your three scrapes.

Clin. jun. [*Saluting* ANGELICA.] One, two, three; your humble servant. Was not that right, Dicky?

Dick. Ay, faith, sir; but why don't you speak to her?

Clin. jun. I beg your pardon, Dicky; I know my distance. Would you have me speak to a lady at the first sight?

Dick. Ay, sir, by all means; the first aim is the surest.

Clin. jun. Now for a good jest, to make her laugh heartily——By Jupiter Ammon, I'll go give her a kiss. [*Goes towards her.*

Enter WILDAIR, *interposing.*

Wild. 'Tis all to no purpose; I told you so before; your pitiful five guineas will never do. You may go; I'll outbid you.

Clin. jun. What, the devil! the madman's here again.

Darl. Bless me, cousin, what d'ye mean! Affront a gentleman of his quality in my house.

Clin. jun. Quality!——Why, madam, I don't know what you mean by your madmen, and your beaux, and your quality——they're all alike, I believe.

Darl. Pray, sir, walk with me into the next room.

[*Exit* DARLING, *leading* CLINCHER; DICKY *following.*

Ang. Sir, if your conversation be no more agreeable than 'twas the last time, I would advise you to make your visit as short as you can.

Wild. The offences of my last visit, madam, bore their punishment in the commission; and have made me as uneasy till I receive pardon, as your ladyship can be till I sue for it.

Ang. Sir Harry, I did not well understand the offence, and must therefore proportion it to the greatness of your apology; if you would, therefore, have me think it light, take no great pains in an excuse.

Wild. How sweet must the lips be that guard that tongue! Then, madam, no more of past offences; let us prepare for joys to come. Let this seal my pardon; [*kisses her hand*] and this [*again*] initiate me to farther happiness.

Ang. Hold, sir—one question, Sir Harry, and, pray, answer plainly—D'ye love me?

Wild. Love you! Does fire ascend? Do hypocrites dissemble, usurers love gold, or great men flattery? Doubt these, then question that I love.

Ang. This shews your gallantry, sir, but not your love.

Wild. View your own charms, madam, then judge my passion; your beauty ravishes my eye, your voice my ear, and your touch has thrill'd my melting soul.

Ang. If your words be real, 'tis in your power to raise an equal flame in me.

Wild. Nay, then, I seize———

Ang. Hold, sir; 'tis also possible to make me detest and scorn you worse than the most profligate of your deceiving sex.

Wild. Ha! A very odd turn this. I hope, madam, you only affect anger, because you know your frowns are becoming.

Ang. Sir Harry, you being the best judge of your own designs, can best understand whether my anger should be real or dissembled; think what strict modesty should bear, then judge of my resentment.

Wild. Strict modesty should bear! Why, faith, madam, I believe the strictest modesty may bear fifty guineas, and I don't believe 'twill bear one farthing more.

Ang. What d'ye mean, sir?

Wild. Nay, madam, what do you mean? if you go to that. I think now fifty guineas is a fair offer for your strict modesty, as you call it.

Ang. 'Tis more charitable, Sir Harry, to charge the impertinence of a man of your figure on his defect in understanding, than on his want of manners.—I'm afraid you're mad, sir.

Wild. Why, madam, you're enough to make any man mad. 'Sdeath, are you not a——

Ang. What, sir?

Wild. Why, a lady of—strict modesty, if you will have it so.

Ang. I shall never hereafter trust common report, which represented you, sir, a man of honour, wit, and breeding; for I find you very deficient in them all three. [*Exit.*

Wild. [*Solus.*] Now I find that the strict pretences which the ladies of pleasure make to strict modesty, is the reason why those of quality are ashamed to wear it.

Enter VIZARD.

Viz. Ah! Sir Harry, have I caught you? Well, and what success?

Wild. Success! 'Tis a shame for you young fellows in town here to let the wenches grow so saucy. I offered her fifty guineas, and she was in her airs presently, and flew away in a huff. I could have had a brace of countesses in Paris for half the money, and *je vous remercie* into the bargain.

Viz. Gone in her airs, say you! And did not you follow her?

Wild. Whither should I follow her?

Viz. Into her bed-chamber, man; she went on purpose. You a man of gallantry, and not understand that a lady's best pleased when she puts on her airs, as you call it!

Wild. She talked to me of strict modesty, and stuff.

Viz. Certainly. Most women magnify their modesty, for the same reason that cowards boast their courage—because they have least on't. Come, come, Sir Harry, when you make your next assault, encourage your spirits with brisk Burgundy: if you succeed, 'tis well; if not, you have a fair excuse for your rudeness. I'll go in, and make your peace for what's past. Oh, I had almost forgot—Colonel Standard wants to speak with you about some business.

Wild. I'll wait upon him presently; d'ye know where he may be found?

Viz. In the piazza of Covent-Garden, about an hour hence, I promised to see him; and there you may meet him—to have your throat cut. [*Aside.*]—I'll go in and intercede for you.

Wild. But no foul play with the lady, Vizard. [*Exit.*

Viz. No fair play, I can assure you. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*The Street before* LUREWELL'S *Lodgings;* CLINCHER *Senior and* LUREWELL *coquetting in the Balcony.*

Enter STANDARD.

Stand. How weak is reason in disputes of love! That daring reason which so oft pretends to question works of high omnipotence, yet poorly truckles to our weakest passions, and yields implicit faith to foolish love, paying blind zeal to faithless women's eyes. I've heard her falsehood with such pressing proofs, that I no longer should distrust it. Yet still my love would baffle demonstration, and make impossibilities seem probable. [*Looks up.*] Ha! That fool too! What, stoop so low as that animal!—'Tis true, woman once fallen, like cowards in despair, will stick at nothing; there's no medium in their actions. They must be bright as angels, or black as fiends. But now for my revenge; I'll kick her cully before her face, call her whore, curse the whole sex, and leave her. [*Goes in.*

LUREWELL *comes down with* CLINCHER *Senior. The Scene changes to a Dining-Room.*

Lure. Oh, Lord, sir, it is my husband! What will become of you?

Clin. sen. Ah, your husband! Oh, I shall be murdered! What shall I do? Where shall I run? I'll creep into an oven; I'll climb up the chimney; I'll fly; I'll swim;——I wish to the Lord I were at the jubilee now.

Lure. Cann't you think of any thing, sir?

Clin. sen. Think! not I; I never could think to any purpose in my life.

Lure. What do you want, sir?

Enter TOM ERRAND.

Er. Madam, I am looking for Sir Harry Wildair; I saw him come in here this morning, and did imagine he might be here still, if he is not gone.

Lure. A lucky hit! Here, friend, change clothes with this gentleman, quickly; strip.

Clin. sen. Ay, ay, quickly, strip: I'll give you half a crown to boot. Come here; so.

[*They change clothes.*

Lure. Now slip you [*to* CLIN. *sen.*] down stairs, and wait at the door till my husband be gone; and get you in there [*to the Porter*] till I call you. [*Puts* ERRAND *in the next room.*

Enter STANDARD.

Oh, sir, are you come? I wonder, sir, how you have the confidence to approach me after so base a trick?

Stand. Oh, madam, all your artifices won't avail.

Lure. Nay, sir, your artifices won't avail. I thought, sir, that I gave you caution enough against troubling me with Sir Harry Wildair's company when I sent his letters back by you? yet, you, forsooth, must tell him where I lodged, and expose me again to his impertinent courtship!

Stand. I expose you to his courtship!

Lure. I'll lay my life you'll deny it now. Come, come, sir; a pitiful lie is as scandalous to a red coat as an oath to a black. Did not Sir Harry himself tell me, that he found out by you where I lodged?

Stand. You're all lies: first, your heart is false; your eyes are double; one look belies another; and then your tongue does contradict them all—Madam, I see a little devil just now hammering out a lie in your pericranium.

Lure. As I hope for mercy, he's in the right on't.—[*Aside.*] Hold, sir, you have got the play-house cant upon your tongue; and think that wit may privilege your railing: but I must tell you, sir, that what is satire upon the stage, is ill manners here.

Stand. What is feigned upon the stage, is here in reality—real falsehood. Yes, yes, madam.—I exposed you to the courtship of your fool Clincher, too; I hope your female wiles will impose that upon me also.—

Lure. Clincher! Nay, now you're stark mad. I know no such person.

Stand. Oh, woman in perfection! not know him? 'Slife, madam, can my eyes, my piercing, jealous eyes, be so deluded? Nay, madam, my nose could not mistake him; for I smelt the fop by his *pulvilio* from the balcony down to the street.

Lure. The balcony! Ha, ha, ha! the balcony! I'll be hanged but he has mistaken Sir Harry Wildair's footman, with a new French livery, for a beau.

Stand. 'Sdeath, madam, what is there in me that looks like a cully! Did not I see him?

Lure. No, no, you could not see him; you're dreaming, colonel. Will you believe your eyes, now that I have rubbed them open?—Here, you friend.

Enter ERRAND, *in* CLINCHER *Senior's Clothes.*

Stand. This is illusion all; my eyes conspire against themselves. 'Tis leger-de-main.

Lure. Leger-de-main! Is that all your acknowledgment for your rude behaviour?—Oh, what a curse is it to love as I do!—But don't presume too far, sir, on my affection: for such ungenerous usage will soon return my tired heart.—Be gone, sir, [*to the Porter*] to your impertinent master, and tell him I shall never be at leisure to receive any of his troublesome visits.—Send to me to know when I should be at home!—Be gone, sir.—I am sure he has made me an unfortunate woman. [*Weeps.*

Stand. Nay, then there is no certainty in nature, and truth is only falsehood well disguised.

Lure. Sir, had not I owned my fond, foolish passion, I should not have been subject to such unjust suspicions: but it is an ungrateful return. [*Weeping.*

Stand. Now, where are all my firm resolves? I will believe her just. My passion raised my jealousy; then, why mayn't love be as blind in finding faults, as in excusing them!—I hope, madam, you'll pardon me, since jealousy, that magnified my suspicion, is as much the effect of love, as my easiness in being satisfied.

Lure. Easiness in being satisfied! You men have got an insolent way of extorting pardon, by persisting in your faults. No, no, sir; cherish your suspicions, and feed upon your jealousy: 'tis fit meat for your squeamish stomach. With me all women should this rule pursue:
Who think us false, should never find us true.
[*Exit in a rage.*

Enter CLINCHER *Senior in the Porter's Clothes.*

Clin. sen. Well, intriguing is the prettiest, pleasantest thing for a man of my parts.—How shall we laugh at the husband when he is gone!—How sillily he looks! He's in labour of horns already.—To make a colonel a cuckold! 'Twill be rare news for the alderman.

Stand. All this Sir Harry has occasioned; but he's brave, and will afford me a just revenge.—

Oh, this is the porter I sent the challenge by—Well, sir, have you found him?

Clin. sen. What the devil does he mean now?

Stand. Have you given Sir Harry the note, fellow?

Clin. sen. The note! what note?

Stand. The letter, blockhead, which I sent by you to Sir Harry Wildair; have you seen him?

Clin. sen. Oh, Lord, what shall I say now? Seen him? Yes, sir—No, sir.—I have, sir—I have not, sir.

Stand. The fellow's mad. Answer me directly, sirrah, or I'll break your head.

Clin. sen. I know Sir Harry very well, sir; but as to the note, sir, I can't remember a word on't: truth is, I have a very bad memory.

Stand. Oh, sir, I'll quicken your memory.

[*Strikes him.*

Clin. sen. Zauns, sir, hold!—I did give him the note.

Stand. And what answer?

Clin. sen. I mean, I did not give him the note.

Stand. What, d'ye banter, rascal?

[*Strikes him again.*

Clin. sen. Hold, sir, hold! He did send an answer.

Stand. What was't, villain?

Clin. sen. Why, truly, sir, I have forgot it: I told you that I had a very treacherous memory.

Stand. I'll engage you shall remember me this month, rascal. [*Beats him off; and exit.*

Enter LUREWELL *and* PARLY.

Lure. *Fort-bon, fort-bon, fort-bon!* This is better than I expected; but fortune still helps the industrious.

Enter CLINCHER *Senior.*

Clin. sen. Ah! the devil take all intriguing, say I, and him who first invented canes.—That cursed colonel has got such a knack of beating his men, that he has left the mark of a collar of bandileers about my shoulders.

Lure. Oh, my poor gentleman! and was it beaten?

Clin. sen. Yes, I have been beaten. But where's my clothes? my clothes?

Lure. What, you won't leave me so soon, my dear, will ye?

Clin. sen. Will ye!—If ever I peep into a colonel's tent again, may I be forced to run the gauntlet. But my clothes, madam.

Lure. I sent the porter down stairs with them; did not you meet him?

Clin. sen. Meet him? No, not I.

Par. No!—He went out at the back-door, and is run clear away, I'm afraid.

Clin. sen. Gone, say you, and with my clothes, my fine jubilee clothes?—Oh, the rogue, the thief!—I'll have him hang'd for murder——But how shall I get home in this pickle?

Par. I am afraid, sir, the colonel will be back presently, for he dines at home.

Clin. sen. Oh, then I must sneak off. Was ever such an unfortunate beau,

To have his coat well thrash'd, and lose his coat also! [*Exit.*

Lure. Thus the noble poet spoke truth: Nothing suits worse with vice than want of sense: Fools are still wicked at their own expence.

Par. Methinks, madam, the injuries you have suffered by men must be very great, to raise such heavy resentments against the whole sex.

Lure. The greatest injury that woman could sustain: they robbed me of that jewel, which preserved, exalts our sex almost to angels; but destroyed, debases us below the worst of brutes, mankind.

Par. But I think, madam, your anger should be only confined to the author of your wrongs.

Lure. The author! Alas, I know him not, which makes my wrongs the greater.

Par. Not know him? 'Tis odd, madam, that a man should rob you of that same jewel you mentioned, and you not know him.

Lure. Leave trifling: 'tis a subject that always sours my temper: but since, by thy faithful service, I have some reason to confide in your secrecy, hear the strange relation.—Some twelve years ago, I lived at my father's house in Oxfordshire, blest with innocence, the ornamental, but weak guard of blooming beauty: I was then just fifteen, an age fatal to the female sex. Our youth is tempting, our innocence credulous, romances moving, love powerful, and men are—villains. Then it happened, that three young gentlemen from the university coming into the country, and being benighted, and strangers, called at my father's: he was very glad of their company, and offered them the entertainment of his house.

Par. Which they accepted, no doubt. Oh, these strolling collegians are never abroad but upon some mischief.

Lure. They had some private frolic or design in their heads, as appeared by their not naming one another, which my father perceiving, out of civility, made no enquiry into their affairs; two of them had a heavy, pedantic, university air; a sort of disagreeable scholastic boorishness in their behaviour; but the third———

Par. Ah, the third, madam,—the third of all things, they say, is very critical.

Lure. He was—but, in short, nature cut him out for my undoing; he seemed to be about eighteen.

Par. A fit match for your fifteen as could be.

Lure. He had a genteel sweetness in his face, a graceful comeliness in his person, and his tongue was fit to sooth soft innocence into ruin. His very looks were witty, and his expressive eyes spoke softer, prettier things than words could frame.

Par. There will be mischief by and by; I never heard a woman talk so much of eyes, but there were tears presently after.

Lure. His discourse was directed to my father, but his looks to me. After supper I went to my chamber, and read Cassandra; then went to bed, and dreamed of him all night; rose in the morning, and made verses; so fell desperately in love.

—My father was so well pleased with his conversation, that he begged their company next day; they consented, and next night, Parly——

Par. Ah, next night, madam——next night (I'm afraid) was a night indeed.

Lure. He bribed my maid, with his gold, out of her honesty, and me, with his rhetoric, out of my honour—She admitted him into my chamber, and there he vowed, and swore, and wept, and sighed——and conquered. [*Weeps.*

Par. A-lack-a-day, poor fifteen. [*Weeps.*

Lure. He swore that he would come down from Oxford in a fortnight, and marry me.

Par. The old bait, the old bait—I was cheated just so myself. [*Aside.*]—But had not you the wit to know his name all this while?

Lure. Alas, what wit had innocence like mine? He told me, that he was under an obligation to his companions of concealing himself then, but that he would write to me in two days, and let me know his name and quality. After all the binding oaths of constancy, joining hands, exchanging hearts, I gave him a ring with this motto: *Love and honour*:—then we parted, and I never saw the dear deceiver more.

Par. No, nor never will, I warrant you.

Lure. I need not tell my griefs, which my father's death made a fair pretence for; he left me sole heiress and executrix to three thousand pounds a year: at last, my love for this single dissembler turned to a hatred of the whole sex; and, resolving to divert my melancholy, and make my large fortune subservient to my pleasure and revenge, I went to travel, where, in most courts of Europe, I have done some execution. Here I will play my last scene; then retire to my country-house, live solitary, and die a penitent.

Par. But don't you still love this dear dissembler?

Lure. Most certainly. 'Tis love of him that keeps my anger warm, representing the baseness of mankind full in view; and makes my resentments work—We shall have that old impotent letcher, Smuggler, here to-night; I have a plot to swinge him, and his precise nephew, Vizard.

Par. I think, madam, you manage every body that comes in your way.

Lure. No, Parly; those men, whose pretensions I found just and honourable, I fairly dismissed, by letting them know my firm resolutions never to marry. But those villains that would attempt my honour, I've seldom failed to manage.

Par. What d'ye think of the colonel, madam? I suppose his designs are honourable.

Lure. That man's a riddle; there's something of honour in his temper that pleases; I'm sure he loves me too, because he's soon jealous, and soon satisfied. But he's a man still. When I once tried his pulse about marriage, his blood ran as low as a coward's.—He swore, indeed, that he loved me, but could not marry me, forsooth, because he was engaged elsewhere. So poor a pretence made me disdain his passion, which otherwise might have been uneasy to me. But hang him, I have teased him enough—Besides, Parly, I begin to be tired of my revenge: but this buss and guinea I must maul once more. I'll hansel his woman's clothes for him. Go get me pen and ink; I must write to Vizard too.

Fortune, this once assist me as before:
Two such machines can never work in vain,
As thy propitious wheel, and my projecting brain.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Covent-Garden.*

WILDAIR *and* STANDARD *meeting.*

Stand. I thought, Sir Harry, to have met you ere this in a more convenient place; but since my wrongs were without ceremony, my revenge shall be so too. Draw, sir.

Wild. Draw, sir! What shall I draw?

Stand. Come, come, sir, I like your facetious humour well enough; it shews courage and unconcern. I know you brave; and therefore use you thus.—Draw your sword.

Wild. Nay, to oblige you, I will draw; but the devil take me if I fight.—Perhaps, colonel, this is the prettiest blade you have seen.

Stand. I doubt not but the arm is good; and therefore think both worth my resentment. Come, sir.

Wild. But pr'ythee, colonel, dost think that I am such a madman as to send my soul to the devil, and body to the worms—upon every fool's errand? [*Aside.*

Stand. I hope you're no coward, sir.

Wild. Coward, sir! I have eight thousand pounds a year, sir.

Stand. You fought in Flanders, to my knowledge.

Wild. Ay, for the same reason that I wore a red coat; because 'twas fashionable.

Stand. Sir, you fought a French count in Paris.

Wild. True, sir; but there was no danger of lands nor tenements: besides, he was a beau, like myself. Now you're a soldier, colonel, and fighting's your trade; and I think it downright madness to contend with any man in his profession.

Stand. Come, sir, no more dallying; I shall take very unseemly methods, if you don't shew yourself a gentleman.

Wild. A gentleman! Why, there again now. A

gentleman! I tell you once more, colonel, that I am a baronet, and have eight thousand pounds a year. I can dance, sing, ride, fence, understand the languages——Now I cann't conceive how running you through the body should contribute one jot more to my gentility. But pray, colonel, I had forgot to ask you, what's the quarrel?

Stand. A woman, sir.

Wild. Then I put up my sword. Take her.

Stand. Sir, my honour's concerned.

Wild. Nay, if your honour be concerned with a woman, get it out of her hands as soon as you can.—An honourable lover is the greatest slave in nature; some will say, the greatest fool. Come, come, colonel, this is something about the Lady Lurewell, I warrant; I can give you satisfaction in that affair.

Stand. Do so then immediately.

Wild. Put up your sword first; you know I dare fight: but I had much rather make you a friend than an enemy. I can assure you, this lady will prove too hard for one of your temper. You have too much honour, too much, in conscience, to be a favourite with the ladies.

Stand. I'm assured, sir, she never gave you any encouragement.

Wild. A man can never hear reason with a sword in his hand. Sheath your weapon; and then if I don't satisfy you, sheath it in my body.

Stand. Give me but demonstration of her granting you any favour, and it is enough.

Wild. Will you take my word?

Stand. Pardon me, sir; I cannot.

Wild. Will you believe your own eyes?

Stand. 'Tis ten to one whether I shall or no; they have deceived me already.

Wild. That's hard—but some means I shall devise for your satisfaction—We must fly this place, else that cluster of mob will overwhelm us.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Mob: TOM ERRAND'S *Wife hurrying in* CLINCHER *Senior in* ERRAND'S *Clothes.*

Wife. Oh! the villain, the rogue, he has murdered my husband. Ah, my poor Timothy!

[*Crying.*

Clin. sen. Dem your Timothy!—your husband has murdered me, woman; for he has carried away my fine jubilee clothes.

Wife. Ay, you cut-throat, have you not got his clothes upon your back there? Neighbours, don't you know poor Timothy's coat and apron?

Mob. Ay, ay, it is the same.

1*st Mob.* What shall we do with him, neighbours?

2*d Mob.* We'll pull him in pieces.

1*st Mob.* No, no; then we may be hang'd for murder: but we'll drown him.

Clin. sen. Ah, good people, pray don't drown me; for I never learned to swim in all my life. Ah, this plaguy intriguing!

Mob. Away with him,——away with him to the Thames.

Clin. sen. Oh, if I had but my swimming-girdle now!

Enter Constable.

Const. Hold, neighbours, I command the peace.

Wife. Oh, Mr Constable, here's a rogue that has murdered my husband, and robbed him of his clothes.

Const. Murder and robbery!—Then he must be a gentleman.——Hands off there;—he must not be abused.——Give an account of yourself. Are you a gentleman?

Clin. sen. No, sir, I'm a beau.

Const. A beau? Then you have killed nobody, I'm persuaded. How came you by these clothes, sir?

Clin. sen. You must know, sir, that walking along, sir, I don't know how, sir, I cann't tell where, sir, and so the porter and I changed clothes, sir.

Const. Very well. The man speaks reason, and like a gentleman.

Wife. But pray, Mr Constable, ask him how he changed clothes with him.

Const. Silence, woman, and don't disturb the court. Well, sir, how did you change clothes?

Clin. sen. Why, sir, he pulled off my coat, and I drew off his: so I put on his coat, and he put on mine.

Const. Why, neighbours, I don't find that he's guilty: search him; and if he carries no arms about him, we'll let him go.

[*They search his pockets, and pull out his pistols.*

Clin. sen. Oh, gemini! My jubilee pistols!

Const. What, a case of pistols! Then the case is plain. Speak, what are you, sir? Whence came you, and whither go you?

Clin. sen. Sir, I came from Russel-street, and am going to the jubilee.

Wife. You shall go to the gallows, you rogue.

Const. Away with him, away with him to Newgate, straight.

Clin. sen. I shall go to the jubilee now, indeed.

[*Exeunt.*

Re-enter WILDAIR *and* STANDARD.

Wild. In short, colonel, 'tis all nonsense: fight for a woman! Hard by is the lady's house; if you please we'll wait on her together: you shall draw your sword; I'll draw my snuff-box: you shall produce your wounds received in war; I'll relate mine by Cupid's dart: you shall look big; I'll ogle: you shall swear; I'll sigh: you shall *sa sa*, and I'll *coupée;* and if she flies not to my arms, like a hawk to its perch, my dancing-master deserves to be damned.

Stand. With the generality of women, I grant you, these arts may prevail.

Wild. Generality of women! Why, there again you're out. They're all alike, sir: I never heard of any one that was particular, but one.

Stand. Who was she, pray?

Wild. Penelope, I think she's called; and that's a poetical story too. When will you find a poet in our age make a woman so chaste?

Stand. Well, Sir Harry, your facetious humour can disguise falsehood, and make calumny pass

for satire; but you have promised me ocular demonstration that she favours you: make that good, and I shall then maintain faith and female to be as inconsistent as truth and falsehood.

Wild. Nay, by what you told me, I am satisfied that she imposes on us all: and Vizard too seems what I still suspected him: but his honesty once mistrusted spoils his knavery.——But will you be convinced, if our plot succeeds?

Stand. I rely on your word and honour, Sir Harry; which if I doubted, my distrust would cancel the obligation of their security.

Wild. Then meet me half an hour hence at the Rummer: you must oblige me by taking a hearty glass with me toward the fitting me out for a certain project, which this night I undertake.

Stand. I guess, by the preparation, that woman's the design.

Wild. Yes, 'faith.—I am taken dangerous ill with two foolish maladies, modesty and love: the first I'll cure with Burgundy, and my love by a night's lodging with the damsel. A sure remedy. *Probatum est.*

Stand. I'll certainly meet you, sir.

[*Exeunt severally.*

Enter CLINCHER *Junior and* DICKY.

Clin. Ah, Dicky, this London is a sad place, a sad vicious place: I wish that I were in the country again. And this brother of mine—I'm sorry he's so great a rake: I had rather see him dead than see him thus.

Dick. Ay, sir, he'll spend his whole estate at this same jubilee. Who d'ye think lives at this same jubilee?

Clin. Who, pray?

Dick. The pope.

Clin. The devil he does! My brother go to the place where the pope dwells! He's bewitched, sure!

Enter TOM ERRAND, *in* CLINCHER *Senior's Cloaths.*

Dick. Indeed, I believe he is, for he's strangely altered.

Clin. Altered! Why he looks like a jesuit already.

Err. This lace will sell. What a blockhead was the fellow to trust me with his coat! If I can get cross the garden, down to the water-side, I am pretty secure. [*Aside.*

Clin. Brother!—Alaw! Oh, gemini! Are you my brother?

Dick. I seize you in the king's name, sir.

Err. Oh, Lord! should this prove some parliament man, now!

Clin. Speak, you rogue; what are you?

Err. A poor porter, sir, and going of an errand.

Dick. What errand? Speak, you rogue.

Err. A fool's errand, I'm afraid.

Clin. Who sent you?

Err. A beau, sir.

Dick. No, no; the rogue has murdered your brother, and stripped him of his clothes.

Clin. Murdered my brother! Oh, crimini! Oh, my poor jubilee brother! Stay, by Jupiter Ammon, I'm heir though. Speak, sir; have you kill'd him! confess that you have killed him, and I'll give you half a crown.

Err. Who, I, sir? Alack-a-day, sir, I never killed any man, but a carrier's horse once.

Clin. Then you shall certainly be hanged; but confess that you killed him, and we'll let you go.

Err. Telling the truth hangs a man, but confessing a lie can do no harm: besides, if the worst come to the worst, I can but deny it again. —Well, sir, since I must tell you, I did kill him.

Clin. Here's your money, sir.—But are you sure you killed him dead?

Err. Sir, I'll swear it before any judge in England.

Dick. But are you sure that he's dead in law?

Err. Dead in law! I can't tell whether he be dead in law. But he's as dead as a door-nail; for I gave him seven knocks on the head with a hammer.

Dick. Then you have the estate by statute.—Any man that's knocked o' th' head is dead in law.

Clin. But are you sure he was *compos mentis* when he was killed?

Err. I suppose he was, sir; for he told me nothing to the contrary afterwards.

Clin. Hey! Then I go to the jubilee.—Strip, sir, strip. By Jupiter Ammon, strip.

Dick. Ah! don't swear, sir.

[*Puts on his brother's clothes.*

Clin. Swear, sir! Zoons, ha'n't I got the estate, sir? Come, sir, now I'm in mourning for my brother.

Err. I hope you'll let me go now, sir?

Clin. Yes, yes, sir; but you must do me the favour to swear positively before a magistrate, that you killed him dead, that I may enter upon the estate without any trouble. By Jupiter Ammon, all my religion's gone since I put on these fine clothes.——Hey, call me a coach somebody.

Err. Ay, master, let me go, and I'll call one immediately.

Clin. No, no; Dicky, carry this spark before a justice, and when he has made oath you may discharge him. And I'll go see Angelica. [*Exeunt* DICK. *and* ERRAND.] Now that I'm an elder brother, I'll court, and swear, and rant, and rake, and go to the jubilee with the best of them. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—LUREWELL'S *House.*

Enter LUREWELL *and* PARLY.

Lure. Are you sure that Vizard had my letter?

Par. Yes, yes, madam; one of your ladyship's footmen gave it to him in the Park, and he told the bearer, with all transports of joy, that he would be punctual to a minute.

Lure. Thus most villains some time or other

are punctual to their ruin; and hypocrisy, by imposing on the world, at last deceives itself.—Are all things prepared for his reception?

Par. Exactly to your ladyship's order: the alderman, too, is just come, dressed and cooked up for iniquity.

Lure. Then he has got women's clothes on?

Par. Yes, madam, and has passed upon the family for your nurse.

Lure. Convey him into that closet, and put out the candles, and tell him, I'll wait on him presently. [*As* PARLY *goes to put out the candles, somebody knocks. Music plays without.*

Lure. This must be Sir Harry; tell him I'm not to be spoken with.

Par. Sir, my lady is not to be spoken with.

Wild. I must have that from her own mouth, Mrs Parly. Play, gentlemen.

[*Music plays again.*

Lure. This must be some clown without manners, or a gentleman above ceremony. Who's there?

WILDAIR *sings.*

Thus Damon knock'd at Celia's door,
He sigh'd, and wept, and begg'd, and swore,
The sign was so, [Knocks.
She answer'd no, [Knocks thrice.
No, no, no.

Again he sigh'd, again he pray'd,
No, Damon, no, I am afraid:
Consider, Damon, I'm a maid.
Consider.
No,
I am a maid.
No, &c.

At last his sighs and tears made way;
She rose, and softly turn'd the key:
Come in, said she, but do not stay.
I may conclude,
You will be rude,
But if you are, you may. [Exit PARLY.

Enter Sir HARRY.

Lure. 'Tis too early for serenading, Sir Harry.

Wild. Wheresoever love is, there music is proper: there's an harmonious consent in their natures, and when rightly joined, they make up the chorus of earthly happiness.

Lure. But, Sir Harry, what tempest drives you here at this hour?

Wild. No tempest, madam, but as fair weather as ever enticed a citizen's wife to cuckold her husband in fresh air. Love, madam.

[WILD. *taking her by the hand.*

Lure. As pure and white as angels' soft desires.

Wild. Fierce as when ripe consenting beauty fires. I'st not so?

Lure. Oh, villain! What privilege have men to our destruction, that thus they hunt our ruin? [*Aside.*] If this be a love token, [WILD. *drops a ring, she takes it up*] your mistress's favours hang very loose about you, sir.

Wild. I cann't, justly, madam, pay your trouble of taking it up, by any thing but desiring you to wear it.

Lure. You gentlemen have the cunningest ways of playing the fool, and are so industrious in your profuseness. Speak seriously; am I beholden to chance or design for this ring?

Wild. To design, upon my honour. And I hope my design will succeed. [*Aside.*

Lure. And what shall I give you for such a fine thing?

Wild. You'll give me another, you'll give me another fine thing. [*Both sing.*

Lure. Shall I be free with you, Sir Harry?

Wild. With all my heart, madam, so I may be free with you.

Lure. Then, plainly, sir, I shall beg the favour to see you some other time; for at this very minute I have two lovers in the house.

Wild. Then to be as plain, I must be gone this minute, for I must see another mistress within these two hours.

Lure. Frank and free.

Wild. As you with me—Madam, your most humble servant. [*Exit.*

Lure. Nothing can disturb his humour. Now for my merchant and Vizard.

[*Exit, and takes the candles with her.*

Enter PARLY, *leading in* SMUGGLER, *dressed in Women's Clothes.*

Par. This way, Mr Alderman.

Smug. Well, Mrs Parly,—I'm obliged to you for this trouble: Here are a couple of shillings for you. Times are hard, very hard indeed; but next time, I'll steal a pair of silk stockings from my wife, and bring them to you—What are you fumbling about my pockets for?

Par. Only setting the plaits of your gown: here, sir, get into this closet, and my lady will wait on you presently.

[*Puts him into the closet, runs out, and returns with* VIZARD.

Viz. Where wouldst thou lead me, my dear auspicious little pilot?

Par. You're almost in port, sir; my lady's in the closet, and will come out to you immediately.

Viz. Let me thank thee as I ought.

[*Kisses her.*

Par. Pshaw! who has hired me best? a couple of shillings, or a couple of kisses?

Viz. Propitious darkness guides the lover's steps, and night, that shadows outward sense, lights up our inward joy. Night! the great awful ruler of mankind, which, like the Persian monarch, hides its royalty to raise the veneration of the world; under thy easy reign dissemblers may speak truth; all slavish forms and ceremonies laid aside, and generous villany may act without constraint.

Smug. [*Peeping out of the closet.*] Bless me! what voice is this?

Viz. Our hungry appetites, like the wild

beasts of prey, now scour about to gorge their craving maws; the pleasure of hypocrisy, like a chained lion, once broke loose, wildly indulges its new freedom, ranging through all unbounded joys.

Smug. My nephew's voice, and certainly possessed with an evil spirit; he talks as profanely as an actor possessed with a poet.

Viz. Ha! I hear a voice. Madam——my life, my happiness, where are you, madam?

Smug. Madam! He takes me for a woman too: I'll try him. Where have you left your sanctity, Mr Vizard?

Viz. Talk no more of that ungrateful subject—I left it where it has only business, with daylight; 'tis needless to wear a mask in the dark.

Smug. Oh, the rogue, the rogue!——The world takes you for a very sober, virtuous gentleman.

Viz. Ay, madam, that adds security to all my pleasure. With me a cully-'squire may squander his estate, and ne'er be thought a spendthrift——With me a holy elder may zealously be drunk, and toast his tuneful noise in sack, to make it hold forth clearer——But what is most my praise, the formal rigid she, that rails at vice and men, with me secures her loosest pleasures, and her strictest honour——She who, with scornful mien, and virtuous pride, disdains the name of whore, with me can wanton, and laugh at the deluded world.

Smug. How have I been deceived! Then you are very great among the ladies?

Viz. Yes, madam, they know that like a mole in the earth I dig deep, but invisible; not like those fluttering noisy sinners, whose pleasure is the proclamation of their faults; those empty flashes, who no sooner kindle, but they must blaze, to alarm the world. But come, madam, you delay our pleasures.

Smug. He surely takes me for the Lady Lurewell—she has made him an appointment too—but I'll be revenged of both.——Well, sir, what are those you are so intimate with?

Viz. Come, come, madam, you know very well—those who stand so high, that the vulgar envy even their crimes, whose figure adds privilege to their sin, and makes it pass unquestioned: fair, high, pampered females, whose speaking eyes, and piercing voice, would arm the statue of a stoic, and animate his cold marble with the soul of an epicure, all ravishing, lovely, soft and kind, like you.

Smug. I'm very lovely and soft indeed! You shall find me much harder than you imagine, friend.——Well, sir, but I suppose your dissimulation has some other motive besides pleasure?

Viz. Yes, madam, the honestest motive in the world—interest——You must know, madam, that I have an old uncle, Alderman Smuggler; you have seen him, I suppose.

Smug. Yes, yes, I have some small acquaintance with him.

Viz. 'Tis the most knavish, precise, covetous old rogue, that ever died of the gout.

Smug. Ah, the young son of a whore! Well, sir, and what of him?

Viz. Hell hungers not more for wretched souls, than he for ill-got pelf: and yet (what's wonderful), he that would stick at no profitable villany himself, loves holiness in another. He prays all Sundays for the sins of the week past; he spends all dinner-time in two tedious graces, and what he designs a blessing to the meat, proves a curse to his family; he's the most——

Smug. Well, well, sir, I know him very well.

Viz. Then, madam, he has a swingeing estate, which I design to purchase as a saint, and spend like a gentleman. He got it by cheating, and should lose it by deceit. By the pretence of my zeal and sobriety, I'll cozen the old miser, one of these days, out of a settlement and deed of conveyance——

Smug. It shall be a deed to convey you to the gallows, then, ye young dog. [*Aside.*

Viz. And no sooner he's dead, but I'll rattle over his grave with a coach and six, to inform his covetous ghost how genteelly I spend his money.

Smug. I'll prevent you, boy; for I'll have my money buried with me. [*Aside.*

Viz. Bless me, madam! here's a light coming this way. I must fly immediately.——When shall I see you, madam?

Smug. Sooner than you expect, my dear.

Viz. Pardon me, dear madam, I would not be seen for the world. I would sooner forfeit my life, my pleasure, than my reputation. [*Exit.*

Smug. Reputation, reputation! That poor word suffers a great deal——Well, thou art the most accomplished hypocrite that ever made a grave plodding face over a dish of coffee and a pipe of tobacco. He owes me for seven years maintenance, and shall pay me by seven years imprisonment; and when I die, I'll leave him the fee-simple of a rope and a shilling——Who are these? I begin to be afraid of some mischief——I wish that I were safe within the city liberties——I'll hide myself. [*Stands close.*

Enter Butler, with other Servants, and Lights.

But. I say there are two spoons wanting, and I'll search the whole house. Two spoons will be no small gap in my quarter's wages.

Serv. When did you miss them, James?

But. Miss them! why, I miss them now——In short, they must be among you; and if you don't return them, I'll go to the cunning man to-morrow morning——My spoons I want, and my spoons I will have.

Serv. Come, come, search about.

[*Search, and discover* SMUGGLER.

But. Hark'e, good woman, what makes you hide yourself? What are you ashamed of?

Smug. Asham'd of! Oh, Lord, sir, I'm an honest old woman, that never was ashamed of any thing.

But. What, are you a midwife, then? Speak, did not you see a couple of stray spoons in your travels?

Smug. Stray spoons!

But. Ay, ay, stray spoons. In short, you stole them; and I'll shake your old limbs to pieces, if you don't deliver them presently.

Smug. Bless me! a reverend elder, of seventy years old, accused for petty larceny!——Why, search me, good people, search me; and if you find any spoons about me, you shall burn me for a witch.

But. Ay, we will search you, mistress.

[*They search, and pull the spoons out of his pocket.*

Smug. Oh, the devil, the devil!

But. Where, where is he? Lord bless us! she is a witch in good earnest, may be.

Smug. Oh, it was some devil, some Covent-Garden or St. James's devil, that put them in my pocket.

But. Ay, ay, you shall be hang'd for a thief, burned for a witch, and then carted for a bawd. Speak, what are you?

Enter LUREWELL.

Smug. I'm the Lady Lurewell's nurse.

Lure. What noise is this?

But. Here is an old succubus, madam, that has stole two silver spoons, and says she is your nurse.

Lure. My nurse! Oh, the impudent old jade! I never saw the withered creature before.

Smug. Then I'm finely caught——Oh, madam, madam, don't you know me? Don't you remember buss and guinea?

Lure. Was ever such impudence!—I know thee!—Why, thou'rt as brazen as a bawd in the side-box. Take her before a justice, and then to Newgate; away!

Smug. Oh, consider, madam, that I'm an alderman!

Lure. Consider, sir, that you're a compound of covetousness, hypocrisy, and knavery, and must be punished accordingly. You must be in petticoats, gouty monster! must ye? You must buss and guinea too; you must tempt a lady's honour, old satyr! Away with him!

[*Hurry him off.*

Still may our sex thus frauds of men oppose,
Still may our arts delude these tempting foes.
May honour rule, and never fall betray'd,
But vice be caught in nets for virtue laid.

[*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Lady* DARLING'S *House.*

Enter DARLING *and* ANGELICA.

Darl. Daughter, since you have to deal with a man of so peculiar a temper, you must not think the general arts of love can secure him; you may therefore allow such a courtier some encouragement extraordinary, without reproach to your modesty.

Ang. I am sensible, madam, that a formal nicety makes our modesty sit awkward, and appears rather a chain to enslave, than a bracelet to adorn us; it should shew, when unmolested, easy and innocent as a dove, but strong and vigorous as a falcon, when assaulted.

Darl. I'm afraid, daughter, you mistake Sir Harry's gaiety for dishonour.

Ang. Tho' modesty, madam, may wink, it must not sleep, when powerful enemies are abroad. I must confess, that, of all men's, I would not see Sir Harry Wildair's faults; nay, I could wrest his most suspicious words a thousand ways, to make them look like honour. But, madam, in spite of love, I must hate him, and curse those practices which taint our nobility, and rob all virtuous women of the bravest men——

Darl. You must certainly be mistaken, Angelica; for I'm satisfied Sir Harry's designs are only to court and marry you.

Ang. His pretence, perhaps, was such; but women, now, like enemies, are attacked; whether by treachery, or fairly conquered, the glory of the triumph is the same. Pray, madam, by what means were you made acquainted with his designs?

Darl. Means, child! Why, my cousin Vizard, who, I'm sure, is your sincere friend, sent him. He brought me this letter from my cousin.

[*Gives her the letter, which she opens.*

Ang. Ha, Vizard!——then I'm abused in earnest——Would Sir Harry, by his instigation, fix a base affront upon me! No, I cann't suspect him of so ungenteel a crime—This letter shall trace the truth. [*Aside.*]——My suspicions, madam, are much cleared; and I hope to satisfy your ladyship in my management, when I next see Sir Harry.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Madam, here's a gentleman below, calls himself Wildair.

Darl. Conduct him up. [*Ex. Ser.*] Daughter, I won't doubt your discretion. [*Exit* DARL.

Enter WILDAIR.

Wild. Oh, the delights of love and Burgundy!—Madam, I have toasted your ladyship fifteen bumpers successively, and swallowed Cupids like loches to every glass.

Ang. And what then, sir?

Wild. Why then, madam, the wine has got into my head, and the Cupids into my heart; and unless, by quenching quick my flame, you kindly ease the smart, I'm a lost man, madam.

Ang. Drunkenness, Sir Harry, is the worst pretence a gentleman can make for rudeness; for the excuse is as scandalous as the fault. There-

fore, pray consider who you are so free with, sir; a woman of condition, that can call half a dozen footmen upon occasion.

Wild. Nay, madam, if you have a mind to toss me in a blanket, half a dozen chambermaids would do better service. Come, come, madam; though the wine makes me lisp, yet it has taught me to speak plainer. By all the dust of my ancient progenitors, I must this night rest in your arms.

Ang. Nay, then——who waits there? [*Enter footmen.*] Take hold of that madman, and bind him.

Wild. Nay, then, Burgundy's the word; slaughter will ensue. Hold—Do you know, scoundrels, that I have been drinking victorious Burgundy? [*Draws.*

Servants. We know you're drunk, sir.

Wild. Then how have you the impudence, rascals, to assault a gentleman with a couple of flasks of courage in his head?

Servants. We must do as our young mistress commands us.

Wild. Nay, then have among ye, dogs!

[*Throws money among them; they scramble, and take it up: he pelting them out, shuts the door, and returns.*

Rascals, poltroons!——I have charmed the dragon, and now the fruit's my own.

Ang. Oh, the mercenary wretches! This was a plot to betray me.

Wild. I have put the whole army to flight; and now I'll take the general prisoner.

[*Laying hold on her.*

Ang. I conjure you, sir, by the sacred name of honour, by your dead father's name, and the fair reputation of your mother's chastity, that you offer not the least offence. Already you have wronged me past redress.

Wild. Thou art the most unaccountable creature—

Ang. What madness, Sir Harry, what wild dream of loose desire could prompt you to attempt this baseness?—View me well—the brightness of my mind, methinks, should lighten outwards, and let you see your mistake in my behaviour. I think it shines with so much innocence in my face, that it should dazzle all your vicious thoughts. Think not I am defenceless, because alone. Your very self is guard against yourself: I'm sure there's something generous in your soul; my words shall search it out, and eyes shall fire it for my own defence.

Wild. [*Mimicking.*] Tal tidum, tidum, tal ti didi didum. A million to one, now, but this girl is just come flush from reading the Rival Queens—'Egad, I'll at her in her own cant—Oh! my Statira; oh! my angry dear, turn thy eyes on me—behold thy beau in buskins.

Ang. Behold me, sir; view me with a sober thought, free from those fumes of wine that throw a mist before your sight, and you shall find that every glance from my reproaching eyes is arm'd with sharp resentment, and with a virtuous pride, that looks dishonour dead.

Wild. This is the first whore in heroics that I have met with. [*Aside.*] Look ye, madam, as to that slender particular of your virtue, we sha'n't quarrel about it; you may be as virtuous as any woman in England, if you please; you may say your prayers all the time. But, pray, madam, be pleased to consider, what is this same virtue that you make such a mighty noise about——Can your virtue bespeak you a front row in the boxes? No; for the player's cann't live upon virtue. Can your virtue keep you a coach and six? No, no; your virtuous women walk on foot.—Can your virtue hire you a pew in the church? Why, the very sexton will tell you, No. Can your virtue stake for you at picquet? No. Then what business has a woman with virtue? Come, come, madam, I offered you fifty guineas; there's a hundred——The devil!—virtuous still!—Why, it is a hundred, five score, a hundred guineas.

Ang. Oh, indignation! Were I a man, you durst not use me thus. But the mean, poor abuse you throw on me, reflects upon yourself: our sex still strikes an awe upon the brave, and only cowards dare affront a woman.

Wild. Affront! 'Sdeath, madam, a hundred guineas will set you up a bank at Basset; a hundred guineas will furnish out your lodging with china; a hundred guineas will give you an air of quality; a hundred guineas will buy you a rich escritoire for your billet-doux, or a fine Common Prayer Book for your virtue; a hundred guineas will buy a hundred fine things, and fine things are for fine ladies, and fine ladies are for fine gentlemen, and fine gentlemen are—'Egad, this Burgundy makes a man speak like an angel——Come, come, madam, take it, and put it to what use you please.

Ang. I'll use it as I would the base unworthy giver; thus——

[*Throws down the purse, and stamps upon it.*

Wild. I have no mind to meddle in state affairs; but these women will make me a parliament-man in spite of my teeth, on purpose to bring in a bill against their extortion. She tramples under foot that deity which all the world adores—Oh, the blooming pride of beautiful eighteen!—Pshaw!—I'll talk to her no longer; I'll make my market with the old gentlewoman; she knows business better——[*Goes to the door.*]——Here, you, friend: pray, desire the old lady to walk in—Hark'e, 'egad, madam, I'll tell your mother.

Enter Lady DARLING.

Darl. Well, Sir Harry, and how d'ye like my daughter, pray?

Wild. Like her, madam!——Hark'e, will you take it?——Why, 'faith, madam——Take the money, I say, or, 'egad, all's out.

Ang. All shall out—Sir, you're a scandal to the name of gentleman.

Wild. With all my heart, madam——In short, madam, your daughter has used me somewhat

too familiarly, though I have treated her like a woman of quality.

Darl. How, sir?

Wild. Why, madam, I have offered her a hundred guineas.

Darl. A hundred guineas! Upon what score?

Wild. Upon what score!—Lord, Lord, how these old women love to hear bawdy!——Why, 'faith, madam, I have never a *double entendre* ready at present: but I'll sing you a song.

Behold the goldfinches, tall al de rall,
And a man of my inches, tall al de rall,
You shall take 'em, believe me, tall al de rall,
If you will give me your tall al de rall.

A modish minuet, madam, that's all.

Darl. Sir, I don't understand you.

Wild. Ay, she will have it in plain terms—Then, madam, in downright English, I offered your daughter a hundred guineas to——

Ang. Hold, sir, stop your abusive tongue, too loose for modest ears to hear——Madam, I did before suspect that his designs were base, now they're too plain; this knight, this mighty man of wit and humour, is made a tool to a knave——Vizard has sent him on a bully's errand, to affront a woman? but I scorn the abuse, and him that offered it.

Darl. How, sir; come to affront us! D'ye know who we are, sir?

Wild. Know who you are! Why, your daughter there, is Mr Vizard's——cousin, I suppose. And for you, madam——Now to call her procuress *á-la-mode de France.*—[*Aside.*]——*J'estime votre occupation*——

Darl. Pray, sir, speak English.

Wild. Then to define her office *á-la-mode de Londres.*—[*Aside.*]——I suppose your ladyship to be one of those civil, obliging, discreet old gentlewomen, who keep their visiting days for the entertainment of their presenting friends, whom they treat with imperial tea, a private room, and a pack of cards. Now I suppose you do understand me.

Darl. This is beyond sufferance! But say, thou abusive man, what injury have you ever receiv'd from me, or mine, thus to engage you in this scandalous aspersion?

Ang. Yes, sir, what cause, what motives could induce you thus to debase yourself below your rank?

Wild. Hey-day! Now, dear Roxana, and you, my fair Statira, be not so very heroic in your style: Vizard's letter may resolve you, and answer all the impertinent questions you have made me.

Darl. and Ang. We appeal to that.

Wild. And I'll stand to't; he read it to me, and the contents were pretty plain, I thought.

Ang. Here, sir; peruse it, and see how much we are injur'd, and you deceiv'd.

Wild. [*Opening the letter.*] But hold, madam, [*To* DARLING;] before I read, I'll make some conditions:—Mr Vizard says here, that I won't scruple thirty or forty pieces. Now, madam, if you have clapt in another cypher to the account, and made it three or four hundred, 'egad I'll not stand to't.

Ang. Now, I cann't tell whether disdain or anger be the most just resentment for this injury.

Darl. The letter, sir, shall answer you.

Wild. Well then—[*Reads.*]—'Out of my earnest inclination to serve your ladyship, and my cousin Angelica'—Ay, ay, the very words, I can say it by heart—'I have sent Sir Harry Wildair to'—What the devil's this?——'Sent Sir Harry Wildair to court my cousin'—He read to me quite a different thing—'He's a gentleman of great parts and fortune'—He's a son of a whore and a rascal—'And would make your daughter very happy [*Whistles*] in a husband.'——[*Looks foolish, and hums a song.*]—Oh! poor Sir Harry, what have thy angry stars design'd!

Ang. Now, sir, I hope you need no instigation to redress our wrongs, since even the injury points the way.

Darl. Think, sir, that our blood for many generations has run in the purest channel of unsullied honour.

Wild. Ay, madam. [*Bows to her.*

Ang. Consider what a tender flower is woman's reputation, which the least air of foul detraction blasts.

Wild. Yes, madam. [*Bows to the other.*

Darl. Call then to mind your rude and scandalous behaviour.

Wild. Right, madam. [*Bows again.*

Ang. Remember the base price you offered me. [*Exit.*

Wild. Very true, madam. Was ever man so catechized?

Darl. Then think that Vizard,—villain Vizard,—caused all this, yet lives: that's all: farewell.

Wild. Stay, madam, [*To* DARLING] one word; is there no other way to redress your wrongs, but by fighting?

Darl. Only one, sir; which if you can think of, you may do; you know the business I entertained you for.

Wild. I understand you, madam. [*Exit* DARLING.] Here am I brought to a very pretty dilemma. I must commit murder or commit matrimony: which is the best now? a licence from Doctors Commons, or a sentence from the Old Bailey? ——If I kill my man, the law hangs me; if I marry my woman, I shall hang myself.——But, damn it——cowards dare fight:—I'll marry, that's the most daring action of the two——So, my dear cousin Angelica, have at you.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Newgate.*

CLINCHER *Senior solus.*

Clin. sen. How severe and melancholy are Newgate reflections! Last week my father died; yesterday I turned beau; to-day I am laid by the heels, and to-morrow shall be hung by the neck. ——I was agreeing with a bookseller about

printing an account of my journey through France and Italy; but now the history of my travels must be through Holborn to Tyburn.——'The last dying speech of Beau Clincher, that was going to the jubilee——Come, a half-penny apiece.'——A sad sound, a sad sound, faith! 'Tis one way to have a man's death make a great noise in the world.

Enter SMUGGLER *and Gaoler.*

Smug. Well, friend, I have told you who I am; so send these letters into Thames-Street, as directed: they are to gentlemen that will bail me. [*Exit Gaoler.*] Eh! this Newgate is a very populous place: here's robbery and repentance in every corner.——Well, friend, what are you? a cut-throat or a bum-bailiff?

Clin. sen. What are you, mistress? a bawd or a witch? Hark'e, if you are a witch, d'ye see, I'll give you a hundred pounds to mount me on a broom-staff, and whip me away to the jubilee.

Smug. The jubilee! O, you young rake-hell, what brought you here?

Clin. sen. Ah, you old rogue, what brought you here, if you go to that?

Smug. I knew, sir, what your powdering, your prinking, your dancing, and your frisking, would come to.

Clin. sen. And I knew what your cozening, your extortion, and your smuggling would come to.

Smug. Ay, sir, you must break your indentures, and run to the devil in a full bottom wig, must you?

Clin sen. Ay, sir, and you must put off your gravity, and run to the devil in petticoats:——You design to swing in masquerade, master, d'ye?

Smug. Ay, you must go to the plays too, sirrah: Lord, Lord! what business has a 'prentice at a play-house, unless it be to hear his master made a cuckold, and his mistress a whore? It is ten to one now, but some malicious poet has my character upon the stage within this month: 'tis a hard matter now, that an honest sober man cannot sin in private for this plaguy stage. I gave an honest gentleman five guineas myself towards writing a book against it; and it has done no good, we see.

Clin. sen. Well, well, master, take courage! Our comfort is, we have lived together, and shall die together, only with this difference, that I have lived like a fool, and shall die like a knave, and you have lived like a knave, and shall die like a fool.

Smug. No, sirrah! I have sent a messenger for my clothes, and shall get out immediately, and shall be upon your jury by and by——Go to prayers, you rogue, to prayers. [*Exit.*

Clin. sen. Prayers! it is a hard taking when a man must say grace to the gallows.—Ah, this cursed intriguing! Had I swung handsomely in a silken garter now, I had died in my duty; but to hang in hemp, like the vulgar, it is very ungenteel.

Enter TOM ERRAND.

A reprieve! a reprieve! thou dear, dear—damned rogue. Where have you been? Thou art the most welcome——son of a whore: where's my clothes?

Er. Sir, I see where mine are. Come, sir, strip, sir, strip.

Clin. sen. What, sir, will you abuse a gentleman?

Er. A gentleman! Ha, ha, ha!——d'ye know where you are, sir? We're all gentlemen here. I stand up for liberty and property. Newgate's a commonwealth. No courtier has business among us. Come, sir.

Clin. sen. Well, but stay, stay till I send for my own clothes: I shall get out presently.

Er. No, no, sir; I'll ha' you into the dungeon, and uncase you.

Clin. sen. Sir, you cannot master me, for I am twenty thousand strong. [*Exeunt struggling.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to Lady* DARLING'S *House.*

Enter WILDAIR, *with Letters; Servants following.*

Wild. Here, fly all around, and bear these as directed; you to Westminster, you to St. James's, and you into the city. Tell all my friends, a bridegroom's joy invites their presence. Look all of ye like bridegrooms also: all appear with hospitable looks, and bear a welcome in your faces. Tell them I am married. If any ask to whom, make no reply; but tell them, that I'm married; that joy shall crown the day, and love the night. Be gone, fly.

Enter STANDARD.

A thousand welcomes, friend; my pleasure's now complete, since I can share it with my friend: brisk joy shall bound from me to you, then back again, and, like the sun, grow warmer by reflection.

Stand. You're always pleasant, Sir Harry; but this transcends yourself: Whence proceeds it?

Wild. Canst thou not guess, my friend? Whence flows all earthly joy? What is the life of man, and soul of pleasure? Woman.———What fires the heart with transport, and the soul with raptures? —Lovely woman.———What is the masterstroke and smile of the creation, but charming virtuous woman?———When Nature in the general composition first brought woman forth, like a flush'd poet, ravish'd with his fancy, with ecstacy it blest the fair production!——Methinks, my friend, you relish not my joy. What is the cause?

Stand. Canst thou not guess?—What is the bane of man, and scourge of life, but woman? ———What is the heathenish idol man sets up, and is damn'd for worshipping? Treacherous woman.———What are those, whose eyes, like basilisks, shine beautiful for sure destruction, whose smiles are dangerous as the grin of fiends,

but false, deluding woman?——Woman, whose composition inverts humanity; their bodies heavenly, but their souls are clay.

Wild. Come, come, colonel, this is too much: I know your wrongs received from Lurewell may excuse your resentment against her. But it is unpardonable to charge the failings of a single woman upon the whole sex. I have found one, whose virtues——

Stand. So have I, Sir Harry; I have found one whose pride's above yielding to a prince. And if lying, dissembling, perjury, and falsehood, be no breaches in a woman's honour, she is as innocent as infancy.

Wild. Well, colonel, I find your opinion grows stronger by opposition; I shall now, therefore, wave the argument, and only beg you for this day to make a shew of complaisance at least.——Here comes my charming bride.

Enter DARLING *and* ANGELICA.

Stand. [*Saluting* ANGELICA.] I wish you, madam, all the joys of love and fortune.

Enter CLINCHER *Junior.*

Clin. Gentlemen and ladies, I'm just upon the spur, and have only a minute to take my leave.

Wild. Whither are you bound, sir?

Clin. Bound, sir! I am going to the jubilee, sir.

Darl. Bless me, cousin! how came you by these clothes?

Clin. Clothes! ha, ha, ha! the rarest jest! ha, ha, ha! I shall burst, by Jupiter Ammon, I shall burst.

Darl. What's the matter, cousin?

Clin. The matter! ha, ha, ha! Why, an honest porter, ha, ha, ha! has knocked out my brother's brains, ha, ha, ha!

Wild. A very good jest, i'faith, ha, ha, ha!

Clin. Ay, sir, but the jest of all is, he knocked out his brains with a hammer, and so he is as dead as a door-nail, ha, ha, ha!

Darl. And do you laugh, wretch?

Clin. Laugh! ha, ha, ha! let me see e'er a younger brother in England that won't laugh at such a jest.

Ang. You appeared a very sober, pious gentleman some hours ago.

Clin. Pshaw, I was a fool then: but now, madam, I'm a wit; I can rake now. As for your part, madam, you might have had me once; but now, madam, if you should fall to eating chalk, or gnawing the sheets, it is none of my fault. Now, madam—I have got an estate, and I must go to the jubilee.

Enter CLINCHER *Senior in a Blanket.*

Clin. sen. Must you so, rogue, must ye? You will go to the jubilee, will you?

Clin. jun. A ghost! a ghost! Send for the Dean and Chapter presently.

Clin. sen. A ghost! No, no, sirrah; I'm an elder brother, rogue.

Clin. jun. I don't care a farthing for that; I'm sure you're dead in law.

Clin. sen. Why so, sirrah, why so?

Clin. jun. Because, sir, I can get a fellow to swear he knocked out your brains.

Wild. An odd way of swearing a man out of his life!

Clin. jun. Smell him, gentlemen; he has a deadly scent about him.——

Clin. sen. Truly the apprehensions of death may have made me savour a little. O, Lord! the colonel! The apprehension of him may make the savour worse, I'm afraid.

Clin. jun. In short, sir, were you a ghost, or brother, or devil, I will go to the jubilee, by Jupiter Ammon.

Stand. Go to the jubilee! go to the Bear-Garden.——The travel of such fools as you doubly injures our country: you expose our native follies, which ridicule us amongst strangers, and return fraught only with their vices, which you vend here for fashionable gallantry: a travelling fool is as dangerous as a home-bred villain. Get you to your native plough and cart, converse with animals like yourselves, sheep and oxen: men are creatures you don't understand.

Wild. Let 'em alone, colonel, their folly will be now diverting. Come, gentlemen, we'll dispute this point some other time: I hear some fiddles tuning; let's hear how they can entertain us. [*A servant enters, and whispers* WILDAIR.

Wild. Madam, shall I beg you to entertain the company in the next room for a moment?

[*To* DARL.

Darl. With all my heart——Come, gentlemen.

[*Exeunt all but* WILDAIR.

Wild. A lady to enquire for me! Who can this be?

Enter LUREWELL.

Oh, madam, this favour is beyond my expectation—to come uninvited to dance at my wedding.———What d'ye gaze at, madam?

Lure. A monster—If thou'rt married, thou'rt the most perjured wretch that e'er avouch'd deceit.

Wild. Hey-day! Why, madam, I'm sure I never swore to marry you: I made indeed a slight promise, upon condition of your granting me a small favour; but you would not consent, you know.

Lure. How he upbraids me with my shame! Can you deny your binding vows, when this appears a witness against your falsehood? [*Shews a ring.*] Methinks the motto of this sacred pledge should flash confusion in your guilty face—Read, read here the binding words of love and honour—words not unknown to your perfidious tongue, though utter strangers to your treacherous heart.

Wild. The woman's stark staring mad, that's certain.

Lure. Was it maliciously designed to let me find my misery when past redress; to let me

know you, only to know you false? Had not cursed chance shewed me the surprising motto, I had been happy—The first knowledge I had of you was fatal to me, and this second worse.

Wild. What the devil is all this! Madam, I'm not at leisure for raillery at present; I have weighty affairs upon my hands; the business of pleasure, madam: any other time—— [*Going.*

Lure. Stay, I conjure you, stay.

Wild. 'Faith, I cann't; my bride expects me; but hark'e, when the honey-moon is over, about a month or two hence, I may do you a small favour. [*Exit.*

Lure. Grant me some wild expressions, Heavens, or I shall burst! Woman's weakness, man's falsehood, my own shame, and love's disdain, at once swell up my breast——Words, words, or I shall burst. [*Going.*

Enter STANDARD.

Stand. Stay, madam, you need not shun my sight; for, if you are perfect woman, you have confidence to outface a crime, and bear the charge of guilt without a blush.

Lure. The charge of guilt! What, making a fool of you? I've done it, and glory in the act: the height of female justice were to make you all hang or drown: dissembling, to the prejudice of men, is virtue; and every look, or sign, or smile, or tear that can deceive, is meritorious.

Stand. Very pretty principles, truly. If there be truth in woman, 'tis now in thee. Come, madam, you know that you're discovered, and, being sensible that you cannot escape, you would now turn to bay. That ring, madam, proclaims you guilty.

Lure. O, monster, villain, perfidious villain! Has he told you?

Stand. I'll tell it you, and loudly too.

Lure. O, name it not——Yet, speak it out; 'tis so just a punishment for putting faith in man, that I will bear it all; and let credulous maids, that trust their honour to the tongues of men, thus hear the shame proclaimed. Speak now, what his busy scandal, and your improving malice, both dare utter.

Stand. Your falsehood cann't be reached by malice nor by satire; your actions are the justest libel on your fame; your words, your looks, your tears, I did believe, in spite of common fame. Nay, 'gainst mine own eyes, I still maintained your truth. I imagined Wildair's boasting of your favours to be the pure result of his own vanity: at last he urged your taking presents of him; as a convincing proof of which, you yesterday from him received that ring, which ring, that I might be sure he gave it, I lent him for that purpose.

Lure. Ha! you lent it him for that purpose!

Stand. Yes, yes, madam, I lent it him for that purpose——No denying it—I know it well, for I have worn it long, and desire you now, madam, to restore it to the just owner.

Lure. The just owner! Think, sir, think but of what importance 'tis to own it: if you have love and honour in your soul, 'tis then most justly yours; if not, you are a robber, and have stolen it basely.

Stand. Ha!—your words, like meeting flints, have struck a light to shew me something strange ——But tell me instantly, is not your real name Manly?

Lure. Answer me first: Did not you receive this ring about twelve years ago?

Stand. I did.

Lure. And were not you about that time entertained two nights at the house of Sir Oliver Manly in Oxfordshire?

Stand. I was, I was! [*Runs to her, and embraces her.*] The blest remembrance fires my soul with transport——I know the rest——you are the charming she, and I the happy man.

Lure. How has blind fortune stumbled on the right! But where have you wandered since?—'Twas cruel to forsake me.

Stand. The particulars of my fortune are too tedious now: but to discharge myself from the stain of dishonour, I must tell you, that immediately upon my return to the university, my elder brother and I quarrelled: my father, to prevent farther mischief, posts me away to travel: I wrote to you from London, but fear the letter came not to your hands.

Lure. I never had the least account of you by letter or otherwise.

Stand. Three years I lived abroad, and at my return found you were gone out of the kingdom, though none could tell me whither: missing you thus, I went to Flanders, served my king till the peace commenced; then fortunately going on board at Amsterdam, one ship transported us both to England. At the first sight I loved, though ignorant of the hidden cause——You may remember, madam, that, talking once of marriage, I told you I was engaged; to your dear self I meant.

Lure. Then men are still most generous and brave—and, to reward your truth, an estate of three thousand pounds a year waits your acceptance; and, if I can satisfy you in my past conduct, and the reasons that engaged me to deceive all men, I shall expect the honourable performance of your promise, and that you will stay with me in England.

Stand. Stay! Nor fame nor glory e'er shall part us more. My honour can be no where more concerned than here.

Enter WILDAIR, ANGELICA, *both* CLINCHERS.

Oh! Sir Harry, Fortune has acted miracles today: the story's strange and tedious; but all amounts to this—that woman's mind is charming as her person, and I am made a convert too to beauty.

Wild. I wanted only this to make my pleasure perfect. And now, madam, we may dance and sing, and love and kiss in good earnest.

A Dance here. After the Dance, enter SMUGGLER.

Smug. So, gentlemen and ladies, I'm glad to find you so merry: is my gracious nephew among ye?

Wild. Sir, he dares not shew his face among such honourable company; for your gracious nephew is—

Smug. What, sir? Have a care what you say.

Wild. A villain, sir.

Smug. With all my heart. I'll pardon you the beating me for that very word. And pray, Sir Harry, when you see him next, tell him this news from me, that I have disinherited him—that I will leave him as poor as a disbanded quarter-master. And this is the positive and stiff resolution of threescore and ten; an age that sticks as obstinately to its purpose, as to the old fashion of its cloak.

Wild. You see, madam, [*To* ANGEL] how industriously fortune has punished his offence to you.

Ang. I can scarcely, sir, reckon it an offence, considering the happy consequence of it.

Smug. Oh! Sir Harry, he is as hypocritical——

Lure. As yourself, Mr Alderman. How fares my good old nurse, pray, sir?

Smug. O, madam, I shall be even with you before I part with your writings and money, that I have in my hands.

Stand. A word with you, Mr Alderman: Do you know this pocket-book?

Smug. O! Lord, it contains an account of all my secret practices in trading. [*Aside.*] How came you by it, sir?

Stand. Sir Harry here dusted it out of your pocket at this lady's house yesterday. It contains an account of some secret practices in your merchandising; among the rest, the counterpart of an agreement with a correspondent at Bourdeaux, about transporting French wine in Spanish casks.—First, return this lady all her writings, then I shall consider whether I shall lay your proceedings before the parliament or not, whose justice will never suffer your smuggling to go unpunished.

Smug. Oh, my poor ship and cargo!

Clin. sen. Hark'e, master, you had as good come along with me to the jubilee now.

Ang. Come, Mr Alderman, for once let a woman advise: Would you be thought an honest man, banish covetousness, that worst gout of age: avarice is a poor, pilfering quality of the soul, and will as certainly cheat, as a thief would steal. Would you be thought a reformer of the times, be less severe in your censures, less rigid in your precepts, and more strict in your example.

Wild. Right, madam, virtue flows freer from imitation than compulsion; of which, colonel, your conversion and mine are just examples.

In vain are musty morals taught in schools,
By rigid teachers, and as rigid rules,
Where virtue with a frowning aspect stands,
And frights the pupil from its rough commands.
But woman———
Charming woman can true converts make;
We love the precept for the teacher's sake.
Virtue in them appears so bright, so gay,
We hear with transport, and with pride obey.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

Now all depart, each his respective way,
To spend an evening's chat upon the play;
Some to Hippolito's; one homeward goes,
And one, with loving she, retires to th' Rose.
The am'rous pair, in all things frank and free,
Perhaps may save the play in Number Three.
The tearing spark, if Phyllis aught gainsays,
Breaks the drawer's head, kicks her, and murders Bays.
To coffee some retreat, to save their pockets;
Others, more generous, damn the play at Locket's;
But there, I hope, the author's fears are vain;
Malice ne'er spoke in generous champaign.
That poet merits an ignoble death,
Who fears to fall over a brave Monteth.
The privilege of wine we only ask;
You'll taste again, before you damn the flask.
Our author fears not you; but those he may,
Who in cold blood murder a man in tea;
Those men of spleen, who, fond the world should know it,
Sit down, and for their two-pence damn a poet:
Their criticism's good, that we can say for't;
They understand a play——too well to pay for't:
From box to stage, from stage to box they run,
First steal the play, then damn it when they've done.
But now, to know what fate may us betide,
Among our friends in Cornhill and Cheapside.
But those, I think, have but one rule for plays:
They'll say they're good, if so the world but says:

If it should please them, and their spouses know it,
They straight enquire what kind of man's the poet.
But from side-box we dread a fearful doom;
All the good-natur'd beaux are gone to Rome.
The ladies' censure I'd almost forgot;
Then for a line or two t' engage their vote:
But that way's odd, below our author's aim,
No less than his whole play is compliment to them:
For their sakes, then, the play cann't miss succeeding;
Though critics may want wit, they have good breeding;
They won't, I'm sure, forfeit the ladies' graces,
By shewing their ill-nature to their faces.
Our business with good manners may be done;
Flatter us here, and damn us when you're gone.

SIR HARRY WILDAIR;

BEING THE SEQUEL OF

THE TRIP TO THE JUBILEE.

BY

FARQUHAR.

PROLOGUE.

OUR authors have, in most their late essays,
Prologu'd their own, by damning other plays;
Made great harangues to teach you what was fit
To pass for humour, and go down for wit.
Athenian rules must form an English piece,
And Drury-Lane comply with ancient Greece:
Exactness only, such as Terence writ,
Must please our masqu'd Lucretias in the pit.
Our youthful author swears he cares not a pin
For Vossius, Scaliger, Hedelin, or Rapin:
He leaves to learned pens such labour'd lays;
You are the rules by which he writes his plays.
From musty books let others take their view;
He hates dull reading, but he studies you.
First, from you beaus his lesson is formality;
And in your footmen there—most nice morality;
To pleasure them, his Pegasus must fly,
Because they judge—and lodge—three storeys high.
From the front-boxes he has pick'd his style,
And learns, without a blush to make them smile;
A lesson only taught us by the fair;
A waggish action———but a modest air.
Among his friends here in the pit he reads
Some rules that every modish writer needs.
He learns from every Covent-Garden critic's face,
The modern forms of action, time, and place;
The action he's asham'd to name——d'ye see;
The time is seven; the place is Number Three:
The masks he only reads by *passant* looks;
He dares not venture far into their books.
Thus then, the pit and boxes are his schools,
Your air, your humour, his dramatic rules.
Let critics censure then, and hiss like snakes;
He gains his ends, if he light fancy takes,
St James's beaus, and Covent-Garden rakes.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Sir HARRY WILDAIR.
Colonel STANDARD.
FIREBALL, *a Sea Captain.*
Mons. MARQUIS, *a sharping Refugee.*
Beau BANTER.
Beau CLINCHER, *turned Politician.*
DICKY, *Servant to Wildair.*
SHARK, *Servant to Fireball.*
Ghost.
Lord BELLAMY.

WOMEN.

ANGELICA.
PARLY.
Lady LUREWELL.
Servants and Attendants.

SCENE,—*St James's.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Park.*

STANDARD *and* FIREBALL *enter, meeting.*

Stand. HA, brother Fireball! Welcome ashore. ——What, heart whole? Limbs firm, and frigate safe?

Fire. All, all, as my fortune and friends could wish.

Stand. And what news from the Baltic?

Fire. Why, yonder are three or four young boys i' th' north, that have got globes and sceptres to play with—They fell to loggerheads about their play-things; the English came in like Robin Good-fellow, cry'd boh! and made them quiet.

Stand. In the next place, then, you're to congratulate my success—You have heard, I suppose, that I've married a fine lady with a great fortune.

Fire. Ay, ay, 'twas my first news upon my landing, that colonel Standard had married the fine lady Lurewell——A fine lady indeed! a very fine lady!——But, faith, brother, I had rather turn skipper to an Indian canoe, than manage the vessel you're master of.

Stand. Why so, sir?

Fire. Because she'll run adrift with every wind that blows: she's all sail and no ballast—Shall I tell you the character I have heard of a fine lady? A fine lady can laugh at the death of her husband, and cry for the loss of her lap-dog. A fine lady is angry without a cause, and pleased without a reason. A fine lady has the vapours all the morning, and the colic all the afternoon. The pride of a fine lady is above the merit of an understanding head; yet her vanity will stoop to the adoration of a peruke. And, in fine, a fine lady goes to church for fashion's sake, and to the basset-table with devotion; and her passion for gaming exceeds her vanity of being thought virtuous, or the desire of acting the contrary—— We seamen speak plain, brother.

Stand. You seamen are like your element, always tempestuous, too ruffling to handle a fine lady.

Fire. Say you so? Why then give me thy hand, honest Frank, and let the world talk on and be damn'd.

Stand. The world talk, say you? What does the world talk?

Fire. Nothing, nothing at all: they only say what's usual upon such occasions——That your wife's the greatest coquet about the court, and your worship the greatest cuckold about the city; that's all.

Stand. How, how, sir?

Fire. That she's a coquet, and you a cuckold.

Stand. She's an angel in herself, and a paradise to me!

Fire. She's an Eve in herself, and a devil to you.

Stand. She's all truth, and the world a liar.

Fire. Why, then——'Egad, brother, it shall be so——I'll back again to White's, and whoever dares mutter scandal of my brother and sister, I'll dash his ratafia in his face, and call him a liar. [*Going.*

Stand. Hold, hold, sir; the world is too strong for us. Were scandal and detraction to be thoroughly revenged, we must murder all the beaus, and poison half the ladies. Those that have nothing else to say, must tell stories; fools over Burgundy, and ladies over tea, must have something that's sharp to relish their liquor; malice is the piquant sauce of such conversation, and without it their entertainment would prove mighty insipid. Now, brother, why should we pretend to quarrel with all mankind?

Fire. Because all mankind quarrel with us.

Stand. The worst reason in the world. Would you pretend to devour a lion, because a lion would devour you?

Fire. Yes, if I could.

Stand. Ay, that's right; if you could! But since you have neither teeth nor paws for such an encounter, lie quietly down, and perhaps the furious beast may run over you.

Fire. 'Sdeath, sir! but I say, that whoever abuses my brother's wife, though at the back of the king's chair, he's a villain.

Stand. No, no, brother, that's a contradiction; there's no such thing as villainy at court.——Indeed, if the practice of courts were found in a single person, he might be styled villain with a vengeance; but number and power authorise every thing, and turn the villain upon their accusers. In short, sir, every man's morals, like his religion now-a-days, pleads liberty of conscience; every man's conscience is his convenience, and we know no convenience but preferment——As, for instance, who would be so complaisant as to thank an officer for his courage, when that's the condition of his pay? And who can be so ill natured as to blame a courtier for espousing that which is the very tenure of his livelihood?

Fire. A very good argument in a very damnable cause. But, sir, my business is not with the court, but with you: I desire you, sir, to open your eyes; at least, be pleased to lend an ear to what I heard just now at the chocolate-house.

Stand. Brother!——

Fire. Well, sir!

Stand. Did the scandal please you when you heard it?

Fire. No.

Stand. Then why should you think it should please me? Be not more uncharitable to your

friends than to yourself, sweet sir. If it made you uneasy, there's no question but it will torment me, who am so much nearer concerned.

Fire. But would you not be glad to know your enemies?

Stand. Pshaw! if they abuse me, they are my friends, my intimate friends, my table company, and bottle companions.

Fire. Why, then, brother, the devil take all your acquaintance. You were so rally'd, so torn!—there was a hundred ranks of sneering white teeth drawn upon your misfortunes at once, which so mangled your wife's reputation, that she can never patch up her honour while she lives.

Stand. And their teeth were very white, you say?

Fire. Very white! Blood, sir, I say they mangled your wife's reputation!

Stand. And I say, that if they touch my wife's reputation with nothing but their teeth, her honour will be safe enough.

Fire. Then you won't hear it?

Stand. Not a syllable. Listening after slander is laying nets for serpents, which, when you have caught, will sting you to death. Let them spit their venom among themselves, and it hurts nobody.

Fire. Lord, Lord, how cuckoldom and contentment go together! Fie, fie, sir! consider you have been a soldier, dignified by a noble post, distinguished by brave actions, an honour to your nation, and a terror to your enemies—Hell! that a man who has stormed Namur should become the jest of a coffee-table. The whole house was clearly taken up with the two important questions, whether the colonel was a cuckold, or a kid pirate?

Stand. This I can't bear. [*Aside.*

Fire. Ay (says a sneering coxcomb) the colonel has made his fortune with a witness; he has secured himself a good estate in this life, and a reversion in the world to come. Then (replies another) I presume he's obliged to your lordship's bounty for the latter part of the settlement. There are others (says a third) that have played with my Lady Lurewell at piquet, besides my lord; I have capotted her myself two or three times in an evening.

Stand. Oh, matrimonial patience, assist me!

Fire. Matrimonial patience! matrimonial pestilence! Shake off these drowsy chains, that fetter your resentments. If your wife has wronged ye, pack her off, and let her person be as public as her character: if she be honest, revenge her quarrel—I can stay no longer—This is my hour of attendance at the Navy-Office: I'll come and dine with you. In the mean time, revenge! think on't. [*Exit.*

Stand. How easy is it to give advice, and how difficult to observe it!—If your wife has wronged ye, pack her off—Ay, but how? The gospel drives the matrimonial nail, and the law clinches it so very hard, that to draw it again would tear the work to pieces——That her intentions have wronged me, here's a young bawd can witness.

PARLY *enters, running across the Stage.*

Here, here, Mrs Parly! Whither so fast?

Par. Oh, Lord! my master!——Sir, I was running to Mademoiselle Furbelo, the French milliner, for a new Burgundy for my lady's head.

Stand. No, child; you're employed about an old-fashioned garniture for your master's head, if I mistake not your errand.

Par. Oh, sir, there's the prettiest fashion lately come over! so airy, so French, and all that!—The pinners are double ruffled, with twelve plaits of a side, and open all from the face; the hair is frizzled all up round the head, and stands as stiff as a bodkin. Then the favourites hang loose upon the temples, with a languishing lock in the middle. Then the caul is extremely wide; and over all is a coronet raised very high; and all the lappets behind——I must fetch it presently.

Stand. Hold a little, child; I must talk with you.

Par. Another time, sir; my lady stays for me.

Stand. One question, first. What wages does my wife give you?

Par. Ten pounds a year, sir, which, God knows, is little enough, considering how I slave from place to place upon her occasions. But then, sir, my perquisites are considerable; I make above two hundred pounds a year by her old clothes.

Stand. Two hundred pounds a year of her old clothes! What then must her new ones cost?——But what do you get by visiting gallants, and piquet?

Par. About a hundred pounds more.

Stand. A hundred pounds more!—Now who can expect to find a lady's woman honest, when she gets so much by being a jade?—What religion are you of, Mrs Parly?

Par. Religion, sir! I can't tell.

Stand. What was your father?

Par. A mountebank.

Stand. Where was you born?

Par. In Holland.

Stand. Were you ever christened?

Par. No.

Stand. How came that?

Par. My parents were anabaptists; they died before I was dipp'd; I then forsook their religion, and have got ne'er a new one since.

Stand. I'm very sorry, madam, that I had not the honour to know the worth of your extraction sooner, that I might have paid you the respect due to your quality.

Par. Sir, your humble servant.

Stand. Have you any principles?

Par. Five hundred.

Stand. Have you lost your maidenhead?—[*She puts on her mask, and nods.*]——Do you love money?

Par. Yaw, Mynheer.

Stand. Well, Mrs Parly, now you have been so free with me, I'll tell you what you must trust to in return: never to come near my house again.

Be gone, monster! fly——Hell and furies! never christened! her father a mountebank!

Par. Lord, sir, you need not be so furious!—Never christened! What then? I may be a very good Christian for all that, I suppose. Turn me off! sir, you sha'n't. Meddle with your fellows; 'tis my lady's business to order her women.

Stand. Here's a young whore for you now! A sweet companion for my wife! Where there's such a hellish confidante, there must be damnable secrets——Be gone, I say—My wife shall turn you away.

Par. Sir, she won't turn me away; she sha'n't turn me away; nor she cann't turn me away. Sir, I say she dare not turn me away.

Stand. Why, you jade, why?

Par. Because I'm the mistress, not she.

Stand. You the mistress!

Par. Yes, I know all her secrets; and let her offer to turn me off if she dares.

Stand. What secrets do you know?

Par. Humph—Tell a wife's secrets to her husband!—Very pretty, faith!—Sure, sir, you don't think me such a Jew; though I was never christened, I have more religion than that comes to.

Stand. Are you faithful to your lady for affection or interest?

Par. Shall I tell you a Christian lie, or a Pagan truth?

Stand. Come, truth for once.

Par. Why, then, interest, interest! I have a great soul, which nothing can gain, but a great bribe.

Stand. Well, though thou art a devil, thou art a very honest one—Give me thy hand, wench. Should not interest make you faithful to me, as much as to others?

Par. Honest to you! Marry, for what? You gave me indeed two pitiful pieces the day you were married, but not a stiver since. One gallant gives me ten guineas, another a watch, another a pair of pendants, a fourth a diamond ring, and my noble master gives me—his linen to mend.—Faugh!—I'll tell you a secret, sir: stinginess to servants makes more cuckolds than ill-nature to wives.

Stand. And am I a cuckold, Parly?

Par. No, faith, not yet; though in a very fair way of having the dignity conferred upon you very suddenly.

Stand. Come, girl, you shall be my pensioner; you shall have a glorious revenue: for every guinea that you get for keeping a secret, I'll give you two for revealing it; you shall find a husband once in your life out-do all your gallants in generosity. Take their money, child; take all their bribes; give them hopes; make them assignations; serve your lady faithfully, but tell all to me: by which means, she will be kept chaste, you will grow rich, and I shall preserve my honour.

Par. But what security shall I have for performance of articles?

Stand. Ready payment, child.

Par. Then give me earnest.

Stand. Five guineas. [*Giving her money.*

Par. Are they right? No Gray's-Inn pieces amongst them?—All right as my leg—Now, sir, I'll give you an earnest of my service. Who d'ye think is come to town?

Stand. Who?

Par. Your old friend, Sir Harry Wildair.

Stand. Impossible!

Par. Yes, faith, and as gay as ever.

Stand. And has he forgot his wife so soon?

Par. Why, she has been dead now above a year.—He appeared in the ring last night with such splendour and equipage, that he eclipsed the beaus, dazzled the ladies, and made your wife dream all night of six Flanders mares, seven French liveries, a wig like a cloak, and a hat like a shuttlecock.

Stand. What are a woman's promises and oaths?

Par. Wind, wind, sir.

Stand. When I married her, how heartily did she condemn her light preceding conduct, and for the future vowed herself a perfect pattern of conjugal fidelity!

Par. She might as safely swear, sir, that this day se'nnight, at four o'clock, the wind will blow fair for Flanders. 'Tis presuming for any of us all to promise for our inclinations a whole week. Besides, sir, my lady has got the knack of coquetting it; and when once a woman has got that in her head, she will have a touch on't every where else.

Stand. An oracle, child. But now I must make the best of a bad bargain; and since I have got you on my side, I have some hopes, that by constant disappointment and crosses in her designs, I may at last tire her into good behaviour.

Par. Well, sir, the condition of the articles being duly performed, I stand to the obligation, and will tell you farther, that by and by Sir Harry Wildair is to come to our house to cards, and that there is a design laid to cheat him of his money.

Stand. What company will there be besides?

Par. Why, the old set at the basset-table; my Lady Lovecards, and the usual company. They have made up a bank of fifteen hundred *louis d'ors* among them; the whole design lies upon Sir Harry's purse; and the French marquis, you know, constantly *taillees.*

Stand. Ay, the French marquis; that's one of your benefactors, Parly;—the persecution of basset in Paris furnished us with that *refugée,* but the character of such a fellow ought not to reflect on those who have been real sufferers for their religion.—But take no notice. Be sure only to inform me of all that passes. There's more earnest for you: be rich and faithful.

[*Exit* STANDARD.

Par. [*Sola.*] I am now not only woman to the Lady Lurewell, but steward to her husband, in my double capacity of knowing her secrets, and commanding his purse. A very pretty office in

a family: for every guinea that I get for keeping a secret, he'll give me two for revealing it.——My comings in, at this rate, will be worth a master in chancery's place, and many a poor templar will be glad to marry me with half my fortune.

DICKY *enters, meeting her.*

Dick. Here's a man much fitter for your purposes.

Par. Bless me! Mr Dicky?

Dick. The very same in longitude and latitude! not a bit diminished, nor a hair's-breadth increased.—Dear Mrs Parly, give me a buss, for I'm almost starved.

Par. Why so hungry, Mr Dicky?

Dick. Why, I ha'n't tasted a bit this year and half, woman. I have been wandering about all over the world, following my master, and come home to dear London but two days ago. Now, the devil take me, if I had not rather kiss an English pair of pattens, than the finest lady in France.

Par. Then you're overjoyed to see London again?

Dick. Oh! I was just dead of a consumption, till the sweet smoke of Cheapside, and the dear perfume of Fleet-ditch, made me a man again.

Par. But how came you to live with Sir Harry Wildair?

Dick. Why, seeing me a handsome personable fellow, and well qualified for a livery, he took a fancy to my figure, that was all.

Par. And what's become of your old master?

Dick. Oh, hang him, he was a blockhead, and I turned him off, I turned him away.

Par. And were you not very sorry for the loss of your mistress, Sir Harry's lady? They say, she was a very good woman.

Dick. Oh! the sweetest woman that ever the sun shined upon. I could almost weep when I think of her. [*Wiping his eyes.*

Par. How did she die, pray? I could never hear how 'twas.

Dick. Give me a buss then, and I'll tell ye.

Par. You shall have your wages when your work's done.

Dick. Well then—Courage!—Now for a doleful tale—You know that my master took a freak to go see that foolish jubilee that made such a noise among us here; and no sooner said than done; away he went; he took his fine French servants to wait on him, and left me, the poor English puppy, to wait upon his lady at home here.—Well, so far so good—But scarce was my master's back turned, when my lady fell to sighing, and pouting, and whining, and crying; and, in short, fell sick upon't.

Par. Well, well, I know all this already; and that she plucked up her spirits at last, and went to follow him.

Dick. Very well. Follow him we did, far and far, and farther than I can tell, till we came to a place called Montpelier, in France; a goodly place truly. But Sir Harry was gone to Rome; there was our labour lost.——But, to be short, my poor lady, with the tiresomeness of travelling, fell sick—and died.

Par. Poor woman!

Dick. Ay, but that was not all. Here comes the worst of the story.—Those cursed barbarous devils, the French, would not let us bury her.

Par. Not bury her!

Dick. No, she was a heretic woman, and they would not let her corpse be put in their holy ground.——Oh! damn their holy ground for me.

Par. Now, had not I better be an honest Pagan, as I am, than such a Christian as one of these?——But how did you dispose the body?

Dick. Why, there was one charitable gentlewoman that used to visit my lady in her sickness; she contrived the matter so, that she had her buried in her own private chapel. This lady and myself carried her out upon our own shoulders, through a back-door, at the hour of midnight, and laid her in a grave that I dug for her with my own hands; and if we had been catched by the priests, we had gone to the gallows, without the benefit of clergy.

Par. Oh, the devil take them. But what did they mean by a heretic woman?

Dick. I don't know; some sort of cannibal, I believe. I know there are some cannibal women here in England, that come to the play-houses in masks; but let them have a care how they go to France; (for they are all heretics, I believe). But I'm sure my good lady was none of these.

Par. But how did Sir Harry bear the news?

Dick. Why, you must know, that my lady, after she was buried, sent me——

Par. How! after she was buried?

Dick. Pshaw! Why, Lord, mistress, you know what I mean; I went to Sir Harry all the way to Rome; and where d'ye think I found him?

Par. Where?

Dick. Why, in the middle of a monastery, among a hundred and fifty nuns, playing at hot-cockles. He was surprised to see honest Dicky, you may be sure. But when I told him the sad story, he roared out a whole volley of English oaths upon the spot, and swore that he would set fire to the pope's palace for the injury done to his wife. He then flew away to his chamber, locked himself up for three days: we thought to have found him dead; but instead of that, he called for his best linen, fine wig, gilt coach, and, laughing very heartily, swore again he would be revenged, and bid them drive to the nunnery; and he was revenged to some purpose.

Par. How, how, dear Mr Dicky?

Dick. Why, in a matter of five days, he got six nuns with child, and left them to provide for their heretic bastards——Ah, plague on them, they hate a dead heretic, but they love a piping-hot warm heretic with all their hearts.——So away we came; and thus did he jog on, revenging himself at this rate through all the catholic countries that we passed, till we came home; and now, Mrs Parly, I fancy he has some designs of revenge too upon your lady.

Par. Who could have thought that a man of his light airy temper would have been so revengeful?

Dick. Why, faith, I'm a little malicious too: where's the buss you promised me, you jade?

Par. Follow me, you rogue. [*Runs off.*

Dick. Allons. [*Follows.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Lady's Apartment.*

Enter two Chambermaids.

1*st Cham.* Are all things set in order? The toilette fixed, the bottles and combs put in form, and the chocolate ready?

2*d Cham.* 'Tis no great matter whether they be right or not; for right or wrong we shall be sure of our lecture: I wish for my part that my time were out.

1*st Cham.* Nay, 'tis a hundred to one but we may run away before our time be half expired; and she's worse this morning than ever.——Here she comes.

Enter Lady LUREWELL.

Lure. Ay, there's a couple of you indeed! But how, how, in the name of negligence, could you two contrive to make a bed as mine was last night; a wrinkle on one side, and a rumple on t'other; the pillows awry, and the quilt askew.—I did nothing but tumble about, and fence with the sheets all night along.——Oh!——my bones ache this morning, as if I had lain all night on a pair of Dutch stairs——Go, bring chocolate.——And, d'ye hear? Be sure to stay an hour or two at least———Well, these English animals are so unpolished! I wish the persecution would rage a little harder, that we might have more of these French refugees among us.

Enter the Maids with Chocolate.

These wenches are gone to Smyrna for this chocolate.——And what made you stay so long?

Cham. I thought we did not stay at all, madam.

Lure. Only an hour and half by the slowest clock in Christendom——And such salvers and dishes too! The lard be merciful to me! What have I committed to be plagued with such animals?——Where are my new japan salvers?——Broke, o'my conscience! All to pieces, I'll lay my life on't.

Cham. No, indeed, madam, but your husband——

Lure. How? husband, impudence! I'll teach you manners. [*Gives her a box on the ear.*] Husband! Is that your Welsh breeding? Ha'n't the colonel a name of his own?

Cham. Well then, the colonel. He used them this morning, and we ha'n't got them since.

Lure. How! the colonel use my things! How dare the colonel use any thing of mine?——But his campaign education must be pardoned——And I warrant they were fisted about among his dirty levee of disbanded officers!——Faugh! the very thoughts of them fellows, with their eager looks, iron swords, tied-up wigs, and tucked-in cravats, make me sick as death.——Come, let me see.——[*Goes to take the chocolate, and starts back.*] Heaven protect me from such a sight! Lord, girl! When did you wash your hands last? And have you been pawing me all this morning with them dirty fists of yours? [*Runs to the glass.*]—I must dress all over again——Go, take it away, I shall swoon else.——Here, Mrs Monster, call up my taylor; and d'ye hear! You, Mrs Hobbyhorse, see if my company be come to cards yet.

Enter Taylor.

Oh, Mr Remnant! I don't know what ails these stays you have made me; but something is the matter, I don't like them.

Rem. I am very sorry for that, madam. But what fault does your ladyship find?

Lure. I don't know where the fault lies; but, in short, I don't like them; I can't tell how; the things are well enough made, but I don't like them.

Rem. Are they too wide, madam?

Lure. No.

Rem. Too straight, perhaps?

Lure. Not at all! they fit me very well; but,———lard bless me! can't you tell where the fault lies?

Rem. Why, truly, madam, I cann't tell.—But your ladyship, I think, is a little too slender for the fashion.

Lure. How! too slender for the fashion, say you?

Rem. Yes, madam, there's no such thing as a good shape worn among the quality; your fine waists are clear out, madam.

Lure. And why did not you plump up my stays to the fashionable size?

Rem. I made them to fit you, madam.

Lure. Fit me! fit my monkey—What, d'ye think I wear clothes to please myself! Fit me! fit the fashion, pray; no matter for me——I thought something was the matter; I wanted quality-air.——Pray, Mr Remnant, let me have a bulk of quality, a spreading counter. I do remember now, the ladies in the apartments, the birth-night, were most of them two yards about. Indeed, sir, if you contrive my things any more with your scanty chambermaid's air, you shall work no more for me.

Rem. I shall take care to please your ladyship for the future. [*Exit.*

Enter Servant.

Serv. Madam, my master desires———

Lure. Hold, hold, fellow; for Gad's sake hold: if thou touch my clothes with that tobacco breath of thine, I shall poison the whole drawing-room. Stand at the door, pray, and speak. [*Servant goes to the door and speaks.*

Serv. My master, madam, desires———

Lure. Oh, hideous! Now the rascal bellows so loud, that he tears my head to pieces.—Here, aukwardness, go take the booby's message, and bring it to me. [*Maid goes to the door, whispers, and returns.*

Cham. My master desires to know how your ladyship rested last night, and if you are pleased to admit of a visit this morning.

Lure. Ay——Why, this is civil———'Tis an insupportable toil, though, for women of quality to model their husbands to good breeding.

Enter STANDARD.

Stand. Good-morrow, dearest angel. How have you rested last night?

Lure. Lard, lard, colonel! What a room have you made me here with your dirty feet! Bless me, sir! will you never be reclaimed from your slovenly campaign airs? 'tis the most unmannerly thing in nature to make a sliding bow in a lady's chamber with dirty shoes; it writes rudeness upon the boards.

Stand. A very odd kind of reception this, truly!—I'm very sorry, madam, that the offences of my feet should create an aversion to my company; but for the future I shall honour your ladyship's apartment as the sepulchre at Jerusalem, and always come in barefoot.

Lure. Sepulchre at Jerusalem! Your compliment, sir, is very far fetched: but your feet indeed have a very travelling air.

Stand. Come, come, my dear, no serious disputes upon trifles, since you know I never contend with you in matters of consequence. You are still mistress of your fortune, and marriage has only made you more absolute in your pleasure, by adding one faithful servant to your desires.—Come, clear your brow of that uneasy chagrin, and let that pleasing air take place that first ensnared my heart. I have invited some gentlemen to dinner, whose friendships deserve a welcome look. Let their entertainment show how blessed you have made me by a plentiful fortune, and the love of so agreeable a creature.

Lure. Your friends, I suppose, are all men of quality?

Stand. Madam, they are officers, and men of honour.

Lure. Officers, and men of honour! That is, they will daub the stairs with their feet, stain all the rooms with their wine, talk bawdy to my woman, rail at the parliament, then at one another, fall to cutting of throats, and break all my china.

Stand. Admitting that I keep such company, 'tis unkind in you, madam, to talk so severely of my friends.——But, my brother, my dear, is just come from his voyage, and will be here to pay his respects to you.

Lure. Sir, I shall not be at leisure to entertain a person of his Wapping education, I can assure you.

PARLY *enters, and whispers her.*

Sir, I have some business with my woman; you may entertain your sea-monster by yourself; you may command a dish of pork and pease, with a bowl of punch, I suppose; and so, sir, much good may do you—Come, Parly.

[*Exeunt* LURE. *and* PAR.

Stand. Hell and furies!

Enter FIREBALL.

Fire. With all my heart—Where's your wife, brother?——Ho! now, man, what's the matter?——Is dinner ready?

Stand. No——I don't know——Hang it, I'm sorry that I invited you;——for you must know that my wife is very much out of order; taken dangerously ill of a sudden———So that———

Fire. Pshaw! Nothing, nothing but a marriage qualm; breeding children or breeding mischief. Where is she, man? Pr'ythee let me see her; I long to see this fine lady you have got.

Stand. Upon my word she's very ill, and cann't see any body.

Fire. So ill that she cann't see any body! What, she's not in labour sure! I tell you, I will see her. Where is she? [*Looking about.*

Stand. No, no, brother; she's gone abroad to take the air.

Fire. What the devil! dangerous sick, and gone out! So sick, that she'll see no body within, yet gone abroad to see all the world!——Ah, you have made your fortunes with a vengeance!—Then, brother, you shall dine with me at Locket's; I hate these family dinners, where a man's obliged to, Oh, lard, madam; no apology, dear sir.——'Tis very good indeed, madam.——For yourself, dear madam.——Where, between the rubbed floor under-foot, the china in one corner, and the glasses in another, a man cann't make two strides without hazard of his life. Commend me to a boy and a bell; coming, coming, sir: much noise, no attendance, and a dirty room, where I may eat like a horse, drink like a fish, and swear like a devil. Hang your family dinners! come along with me.

As they are going out, BANTER *enters; who seeing them, seems to retire.*

Stand. Who's that? Come in, sir. Your business, pray, sir?

Ban. Perhaps, sir, it may not be so proper to inform you; for you appear to be as great a stranger here as myself.

Fire. Come, come away, brother, he has some business with your wife.

Ban. His wife! Gad so! A pretty fellow, a very pretty fellow, a likely fellow, and a handsome

fellow; I find nothing like a monster about him: I would fain see his forehead though———Sir, your humble servant.

Stand. Yours, sir.——But why d'ye stare so in my face?

Ban. I was told, sir, that the lady Lurewell's husband had something very remarkable over his eyes, by which he might be known.

Fire. Mark that, brother. [*In his ear.*

Stand. Your information, sir, was right; I have a cross cut over my left eye that's very remarkable.—But, pray, sir, by what marks are you to be known?

Ban. Sir, I am dignified and distinguished by the name and title of Beau Banter; I'm younger brother to Sir Harry Wildair; and I hope to inherit his estate with his humour; for his wife, I'm told, is dead, and has left no child.

Stand. Oh, sir! I'm your very humble servant: you're not unlike your brother in the face; but methinks, sir, you don't become his humour altogether so well; for what's nature in him looks like affectation in you.

Ban. Oh, lard, sir! 'tis rather nature in me, what is acquired by him; he's beholden to his education for his air. Now, where d'ye think my humour was established?

Stand. Where?

Ban. At Oxford.

Stand. and *Fire.* At Oxford!

Ban. Ay: there I have been sucking my dear *Alma Mater* these seven years: yet, in defiance to legs of mutton, small beer, crabbed books, and sour-faced doctors, I can dance a minuet, court a mistress, play at piquet, or make a *paroli*, with any Wildair in Christendom. In short, sir, in spite of the university, I'm a pretty gentleman.—Colonel, where's your wife?

Fire. [*Mimicking him.*] In spite of the university, I'm a pretty gentleman——Then, colonel, where is your wife?——Hark ye, young Plato, whether would you have your nose slit, or your ears cut?

Ban. First tell me, sir, which would you choose, to be run through the body, or shot through the head?

Fire. Follow me, and I'll tell ye.

Ban. Sir, my servants shall attend ye, if you have no equipage of your own.

Fire. Blood, sir!

Stand. Hold, brother, hold; he's a boy.

Ban. Look ye, sir; I keep half a dozen footmen, that have no business upon earth but to answer impertinent questions. Now, sir, if your fighting stomach can digest these six brawny fellows for a breakfast, their master, perhaps, may do you the favour to run you through the body for a dinner.

Fire. Sirrah, will you fight me? I received just now six month's pay, and by this light, I'll give you the half on't for one fair blow at your skull.

Ban. Down with your money, sir.

Stand. No, no, brother; if you are so free of your pay, get into the next room; there you'll find some company at cards, I suppose; you may find opportunity for your revenge; my house protects him now.

Fire. Well, sir, the time will come. [*Exit.*

Ban. Well said, Brazen-head.

Stand. I hope, sir, you'll excuse the freedom of this gentleman; his education has been among the boisterous elements, the winds and waves.

Ban. Sir, I value neither him nor his wind and waves neither; I am privileged to be very impertinent, being an Oxonian, and obliged to fight no man, being a beau.

Stand. Sir, I admire the freedom of your condition.—But pray, sir, have you seen your brother since he came last over?

Ban. I han't seen my brother these seven years, and scarcely heard from him but by report of others. About a month ago he was pleased to honour me with a letter from Paris, importing his design of being in London very soon, with a desire of meeting me here. Upon this, I changed my cap and gown for a long wig and sword, came up to London to attend him, and went to his house; but that was all in sable for the death of his wife; there I was told that he designed to change his habitation, because he would avoid all remembrances that might disturb his quiet. You are the first person that has told me of his arrival, and I expect that you may likewise inform me where to wait on him.

Stand. And I suppose, sir, this was the business that occasioned me the honour of this visit.

Ban. Partly this, and partly an affair of greater consequence. You must know, sir, that though I have read ten thousand lies in the university, yet I have learned to speak the truth myself; and, to deal plainly with you, the honour of this visit, as you were pleased to term it, was designed to the lady Lurewell.

Stand. My wife, sir!

Ban. My lady Lurewell, I say, sir.

Stand. But I say my wife, sir.——What!

Ban. Why, look ye, sir; you may have the honour of being called the lady Lurewell's husband; but you will never find in any author, either ancient or modern, that she's called Mr Standard's wife. 'Tis true, you're a handsome young fellow; she liked you, she married you; and though the priest made you both one flesh, yet there's no small distinction in your blood. You are still a disbanded colonel, and she is still a woman of quality, I take it.

Stand. And you are the most impudent young fellow I ever met with in my life, I take it.

Ban. Sir, I'm a master of arts, and I plead the privilege of my standing.

A Servant enters, and whispers BANTER.

Serv. Sir, the gentleman in the coach below says, he'll be gone unless you come presently.

Ban. I had forgot——Colonel, your humble servant. [*Exit.*

Stand. Sir, you must excuse me for not waiting on you down stairs.——An impudent young dog! [*Exit another way.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to another Apartment in the same House.*

LUREWELL, *Ladies, Mons.* MARQUIS, *and* FIREBALL, *enter, as losing Gamesters, one after another, tearing their Cards, and flinging them about the Room.*

Lure. Ruined! undone! destroyed!

1*st La.* Oh, fortune! fortune! fortune!

2*d La.* What will my husband say?

Mons. Oh, *malheur! malheur! malheur!*

Fire. Blood and fire, I have lost six months pay.

Mons. A hundred and ten pistoles, sink me.

Fire. Sink you! sink me, that have lost two hundred and ten pistoles.——Sink you, indeed!

Lure. But why would you hazard the bank upon one card?

Mons. Because me had lose by de card tree times before.—Look dere, madame, de very next card had been out. Oh, *Morbleu! qui sa?*

Lure. I relied altogether on your setting the cards; you used to *taillee* with success.

Mons. Morbleu, madame, me never lose before: but dat Monsieur Sir Arry, dat Chevalier Wildair, is the devil——Vere is the de Chevalier?

Lure. Counting our money within yonder.——Go, go, be gone; and bethink yourself of some revenge.—Here he comes.

Enter WILDAIR.

Wild. Fifteen hundred and seventy louis d'ors!—Tall dall de rall. [*Sings.*] Look ye, gentlemen, any body may dance to this tune;—Tall dall de rall. I dance to the tune of fifteen hundred pounds, the most elevated piece of music that ever I heard in my life; they are the prettiest castagnets in the world. [*Chinks the money.*] Here, waiters, there's cards and candles for you. [*Gives the servants money.*] Mrs Parly——here's hoods and scarfs for you: [*Gives her money*]; and here's fine coaches, splendid equipage, lovely women, and victorious Burgundy for me.—Oh, ye charming angels! the loser's sorrow, and the gainer's joy; get you into my pocket.—Now, gentlemen and ladies, I am your humble servant ——You'll excuse me, I hope, the small devotion here that I pay to my good fortune——Ho, now! Mute!—Why, ladies, I know that losers have leave to speak; but I don't find that they're privileged to be dumb.—Monsieur! Ladies! Captain! [*Claps the captain on the shoulder.*

Fire. Death and hell! Why d'ye strike me, sir? [*Drawing.*

Wild. To comfort you, sir.——Your ear, captain.—The king of Spain is dead.

Fire. The king of Spain dead!

Wild. Dead as Julius Cæsar; I had a letter on't just now.

Fire. Tall dall de rall. [*Sings.*] Look ye, sir, pray strike me again, if you please.—See here, sir, you have left me but one solitary guinea in the world. [*Puts it in his mouth.*] Down it goes, i'faith.——Allons for the Thatched House and the Mediterranean.—Tall dall de rall. [*Exit.*

Wild. Ha, ha, ha!—Bravely resolved, captain.

Lure. Bless me, Sir Harry! I was afraid of a quarrel. I'm so much concerned!

Wild. At the loss of your money, madam. But why, why should the fair be afflicted? Your eyes, your eyes, ladies, much brighter than the sun, have equal power with him, and can transform to gold whate'er they please. The lawyer's tongue, the soldier's sword, the courtier's flattery, and the merchant's trade, are slaves that dig the golden mines for you. Your eyes untie the miser's knotted purse; [*To one lady*] melt into coin the magistrate's massy chain.—Youth mints for you hereditary lands. [*To another.*] And gamesters only win when they can lose to you. [*To* LUREWELL.]—This luck is the most rhetorical thing in nature.

Lure. I have a great mind to forswear cards as long as I live.

1*st La.* And I.

2*d La.* And I. [*Crying, and Exit.*

Wild. What, forswear cards! Why, madam, you'll ruin our trade.—I'll maintain, that the money at courts circulates more by the basset-bank, than the wealth of the merchants by the bank of the city. Cards! the great ministers of fortune's power, that blindly shuffle out her thoughtless favours, and make a knave more powerful than a king——What adoration do these powers receive [*Lifting up a card*] from the bright hands and fingers of the fair, always lift up to pay devotion here! And the pleasing fears, the anxious hopes, and dubious joy that entertain our mind! The capot at piquet, the paroli at basset;—and then ombre! who can resist the charms of mattadors?

Lure. Ay, Sir Harry; and then the *sept le va, quinze la va, et trente le va.*

Wild. Right, right, madam.

Lure. Then the nine of diamonds at comet, three fives at cribbage, and pam in lanteraloo, Sir Harry!

Wild. Ay, madam, these are charms indeed.—Then the pleasure of picking our husband's pocket over-night, to play at basset next day! Then the advantage a fine gentleman may make of a lady's necessity, by gaining a favour for fifty pistoles, which a hundred years courtship could never have produced.

Lure. Nay, nay, Sir Harry, that's foul play.

Wild. Nay, nay, madam, it is nothing but the game; and I have played it so in France a hundred times.

Lure. Come, come, sir, no more on't. I'll tell you in three words, that rather than forego my cards, I'll forswear my visits, fashions, my monkey, friends and relations.

Wild. There spoke the spirit of true-born English women of quality, with a true French education.

Lure. Look ye, Sir Harry; I am well born, and I was well bred; I brought my husband a large fortune, he shall mortgage, or I will elope.

Wild. No, no, madam! there's no occasion for that: see here, madam.

Lure. What, the singing birds! Sir Harry, let me see.

Wild. Pugh, madam, these are but a few.——But I could wish, *de tout mon cœur*, for *quelque commodité*, where I might be handsomely plundered of them.

Lure. *Ah, Chevalier! toujours obligeant, engageant, et tout sa.*——

Wild. *Allons, allons, madame, tout a votre service.* [*Pulls her.*

Lure. No, no, Sir Harry, not at this time o' day; you shall hear from me in the evening.

Wild. Then, madam, I'll leave you something to entertain you the while. 'Tis a French pocket-book, with some remarks of my own upon the new way of making love. Please to peruse it, and give me your opinion in the evening.

[*Exit.*

Lure. [*Opening the book.*] A French pocket-book, with remarks upon the new way of making love! Then Sir Harry is turning author, I find.—What's here?—Hi, hi, hi! A bank bill for a hundred pounds.—The new way of making love!—*Pardie c'est fort gallant*—One of the prettiest remarks that ever I saw in my life! Well now, that Wildair's a charming fellow;——Hi, hi, hi!——He has such an air, and such a turn in what he does!——I warrant now there's a hundred home-bred blockheads would come—madam, I'll give you a hundred guineas if you'll let me—Faugh! hang their nauseous immodest proceedings.——Here's a hundred pounds now, and he never names the thing: I love an impudent action with an air of modesty with all my heart.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Lady LUREWELL *and Monsieur* MARQUIS.

Lure. Well, monsieur, and have you thought how to retaliate your ill fortune?

Mons. Madame, I have tought dat fortune be one blind bitch. Why should fortune be kinder to de Anglis Chevalier dan to de France Marquis? Ave I not de bon grace? Ave not I de personage? Ave I not de understanding? Can de Anglis Chevalier dance better dan I? Can de Anglis Chevalier fence better dan I? Can de Anglis Chevalier play basset better dan I? Den why should fortune be kinder to de Anglis Chevalier dan de France Marquis?

Lure. Why? Because fortune is blind.

Mons. Blind! Yes begar, and dum and deaf too.—Vell den, fortune give de Anglis man de riches, but nature gave de France man de politique to correct de unequal distribution.

Lure. But how can you correct it, monsieur?

Mons. Ecoutez, madame. Sir Arry Wildair his vife be dead.

Lure. And what advantage can you make of that?

Mons. Begar, madame——Hi, hi, hi!—De Anglis man's dead vife sall cuckold her usband!

Lure. How, how, sir, a dead woman cuckold her husband!

Mons. Mark! madame: we France-men make de distinction between de design and de term of de treaty.—She cannot touch his head, but she can cuckold his pocket of ten tousan livres.

Lure. Pray explain yourself, sir.

Mons. I ave Sir Arry Wildair his vife in my pocket.

Lure. How! Sir Harry's wife in your pocket!

Mons. Hold, madame; dere is an autre distinction between de design and de term of de treaty

Lure. Pray, sir, no more of your distinctions, but speak plain.

Mons. Wen de France-man's politique is in his head, dere is nothing but distinction upon his tongue.—See here, madame! I ave de picture of Sir Harry's vife in my pocket.

Lure. Is it possible?

Mons. Voyez.

Lure. The very same, and finely drawn. Pray, monsieur, how did you purchase it?

Mons. As me did purchase de picture, so me did gain the substance, de dear, dear substance, by de bon mien, de France, air, chatant, charmant, de polique à la tête, and dançant à la pie.

Lure. Lard bless me! How cunningly some women can play the rogue! Ah, have I found it out! Now, as I hope for mercy, I am glad on't. I hate to have any woman more virtuous than myself.——Here was such a work with my lady Wildair's piety! my lady Wildair's conduct! and my lady Wildair's fidelity, forsooth! Now, dear monsieur, you have infallibly told me the best news that I ever heard in my life. Well, and she was but one of us! heh!

Mons. Oh, madame; me no tell tale, me no scandalize de dead; de picture be dumb, de picture say noting.

Lure. Come, come, sir, no more distinctions; I'm sure it was so. I would have given the world for such a story of her while she was living. She was charitable, forsooth! and she was devout, forsooth! and every body was twitted i'th' teeth with my lady Wildair's reputation: and why don't you mark her behaviour, and her discretion? she goes to church twice a-day.—Ah, I hate these

congregation-women. There's such a fuss and such a clatter about their devotion, that it makes more noise than all the bells in the parish.——Well, but what advantage can you make now of the picture?

Mons. De advantage of ten tousan livres, pardie.—*Attendez-vous*, madame; dis lady she die at Montpelier, in France; I ave de broder in dat city dat write me one account dat she die in dat city, and dat she send me dis picture as a legacy, wid a tousan baisemains to de dear marquis, de charmant marquis, mon cœur le marquis.

Lure. Ay, here was devotion! here was discretion! here was fidelity! Mon cœur le marquis! Ha, ha, ha!——Well, but how will this procure the money?

Mons. Now, madame, for de France politique.

Lure. Ay, what is the French politic?

Mons. Never to tell a secret to a voman.—Madame, *je suis votre serviteur.* [*Runs off.*

Lure. Hold, hold, sir, we sha'n't part so; I will have it. [*Follows.*

Enter STANDARD *and* FIREBALL.

Fire. Hah! look! look! look you there, brother! See how they coquet it! Oh! there's a look! there's a simper! there's a squeeze for you! ay, now the marquis is at it. *Mon cœur, ma foy, pardie, allons:* Don't you see how the French rogue has the head, and the feet, and the hands, and the tongue, all going together?

Stand. [*Walking in disorder.*] Where's my reason? Where's my philosophy? Where's my religion now?

Fire. I'll tell you where they are;—in your forehead, sir.——Blood! I say revenge.

Stand. But how, dear brother?

Fire. Why, stab him, stab him now.——Italian him, Spaniard him, I say.

Stand. Stab him! Why cuckoldom's a hydra that bears a thousand heads; and though I should cut this one off, the monster still would sprout. Must I murder all the fops in the nation, and, to save my head from horns, expose my neck to the halter?

Fire. 'Sdeath, sir, cann't you kick and cuff? Kick one.

Stand. Cane another.

Fire. Cut off the ears of a third.

Stand. Slit the nose of a fourth.

Fire. Tear cravats.

Stand. Burn perukes.

Fire. Shoot their coach-horses.

Stand. A noble plot.—But, now 'tis laid, how shall we put it in execution? For not one of these fellows stirs about without his guard-du-corps. Then they're stout as heroes; for I can assure you, that a beau with six footmen shall fight you or any gentleman in Christendom.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Sir, here's Mr Clincher below, who begs the honour to kiss your hand.

Stand. Ay, why, here's another beau.

Fire. Let him come, let him come; I'll shew you how to manage a beau presently.

Stand. Hold, hold, sir; this is a simple inoffensive fellow, that will rather make us diversion.

Fire. Diversion! ay. Why, I'll knock him down for diversion.

Stand. No, no; pr'ythee be quiet; I gave him a surfeit of intriguing some months ago, before I was married.——Here, bid him come up. He's worth your acquaintance, brother.

Fire. My acquaintance! What is he?

Stand. A fellow of a strange weathercock head, very hard, but as light as the wind; constantly full of the times, and never fails to pick up some humour or other out of the public revolutions, that proves diverting enough. Some time ago he had got the travelling maggot in his head, and was going to the jubilee upon all occasions; but lately, since the new revolution in Europe, another spirit has possessed him, and he runs stark mad after news and politics.

Enter CLINCHER.

Clin. News, news, colonel! great—Eh! what's this fellow? Methinks he has a kind of suspicious air.——Your ear, colonel.—The pope's dead.

Stand. Where did you hear it?

Clin. I read it in the public news. [*Whispering.*

Stand. Ha, ha, ha!——And why d'ye whisper it for a secret?

Clin. Odso! Faith that's true—but that fellow there; what is he?

Stand. My brother Fireball, just come home from the Baltic.

Clin. Odso! noble captain, I'm your most humble and obedient servant, from the poop to the forecastle.—Nay, a kiss o' t'other side, pray.—Now, dear captain, tell us the news.—Odso! I'm so pleased I have met you! Well, the news, dear captain.—You sailed a brave squadron of men of war to the Baltic.—Well, and what then? Eh!

Fire. Why then——we came back again.

Clin. Did you, faith?—Foolish! foolish! very foolish! a right sea captain——But what did you do? How did you fight? What storms did you meet? And what whales did you see?

Fire. We had a violent storm off the coast of Jutland.

Clin. Jutland! ay, that's part of Portugal.—Well, and so,—you entered the Sound;—and you mauled Copenhagen, 'faith.——And then that pretty, dear, sweet, pretty king of Sweden!—what sort of a man is he, pray?

Fire. Why, tall and slender.

Clin. Tall and slender! much about my pitch? Heh!

Fire. Not so gross, not altogether so low.

Clin. No! I'm sorry for't; very sorry, indeed.——

Here PARLY *enters, and stands at the door;* CLINCHER *beckons her with his hands behind, going backwards, and speaking to her and the gentlemen by turns.*] Well, and what more? And so you bombarded Copenhagen!—[Mrs Parly.]—Whiz, slap went the bombs!—[Mrs Parly.]—And so—Well, not altogether so gross, you say—[Here's a letter, you jade.]—Very tall, you say? Is the king very tall?—[Here's a guinea, you jade.]—[*She takes the letter, and the colonel observes him.*]—Hem, hem! Colonel, I'm mightily troubled with the pthisick of late.—Hem, hem! a strange stoppage of my breast here. Hem! but now it is off again.——Well, but, captain, you tell us no news at all.

Fire. I tell you one piece that all the world knows, and still you are a stranger to it.

Clin. Bless me! what can this be?

Fire. That you are a fool.

Clin. Eh! witty, witty, sea captain. Odso! and I wonder, captain, that your understanding did not split your ship to pieces.

Fire. Why so, sir?

Clin. Because, sir, it is so very shallow, very shallow! There's wit for you, sir——

Enter PARLY, *who gives the Colonel a Letter.*

Odso! a letter! then there's news.——What, is it the foreign post? What news, dear colonel? What news? Hark ye, Mrs Parly.

[*He talks with* PARLY, *while the Colonel reads the letter.*

Stand. The son of a whore! Is it he?

[*Looks at* CLINCHER.

[*Reads.*]—'Dear madam,

'I was afraid to break open the seal of your letter, lest I should violate the work of your fair hands.'—Oh, fulsome fop!—'I therefore with the warmth of my kisses thawed it asunder.'—Ay, here's such a turn of style as takes a fine lady! 'I have no news, but that the pope's dead, and I have some packets upon that affair to send my correspondent in Wales; but I shall wave all business, and hasten to wait on you at the hour appointed, with the wings of a flying-post.

Yours, TOBY CLINCHER.'

Very well, Mr Toby.——Hark'e, brother, this fellow's a rogue.

Fire. A damned rogue.

Stand. See here! a letter to my wife!

Fire. 'Sdeath! let me tear him to pieces.

Stand. No, no, we'll manage him to more advantage. Take him with you to Locket's, and invent some way or other to fuddle him.——Here, Mr Clincher, I have prevailed on my brother here to give you a particular account of the whole voyage to the Sound by his own journal, if you please to honour him with your company at Locket's.

Clin. His own journal! Odso, let me see it.

Stand. Shew it him.

Fire. Here, sir.

Clin. Now for news—[*Reads.*]—Thursday, Aug. the 17th, from the 6th at noon to this day noon, winds variable, courses per traverse, true course protracted, with all impediments allowed, is north forty-five degrees, west sixty miles, difference of latitude forty-two miles, departure west forty miles, latitude, per judgment, fifty-four degrees thirteen minutes, meridian distance current from the bearing of the land, and the latitude is eighty-eight miles.——Odso! great news, faith.——Let me see. At noon broke our main-top-sail-yard, being rotten in the slings: two whales southward.——Odso! a whale! great news, faith.—Come, come along, captain. But, d'ye hear? with this proviso, gentlemen, that I won't drink; for, hark'e, captain, between you and I, there's a fine lady in the wind, and I shall have the longitude and latitude of a fine lady, and the——

Fire. A fine lady! ah, the rogue! [*Aside.*

Clin. Yes, a fine lady, colonel, a very fine lady.——Come, no ceremony, good captain.

[*Exeunt* FIREBALL *and* CLINCHER.

Stand. Well, Mrs Parly, how go the rest of our affairs?

Par. Why, worse and worse, sir: here's more mischief still, more branches a-sprouting.

Stand. Of whose planting, pray?

Par. Why, that impudent young rogue, Sir Harry Wildair's brother, has commenced his suit, and fee'd counsel already.—Look here, sir; two pieces, for which, by article, I am to receive four.

Stand. 'Tis a hard case, now, that a man must give four guineas for the good news of his dishonour. Some men throw away their money in debauching other men's wives, and I lay out mine to keep my own honest: but this is making a man's fortune!——Well, child, there's your pay; and I expect, when I come back, a true account how the business goes on.

Par. But suppose the business be done before you come back?

Stand. No, no; she ha'n't seen him yet; and her pride will preserve her against the first assaults. Besides, I sha'n't stay.

[*Exeunt* STAND. *and* PAR.

SCENE III.—*Changes to another Room in the same House.*

Enter WILDAIR *and* LUREWELL.

Lure. Well now, Sir Harry, this book you gave me! as I hope to breathe, I think 'tis the best penned piece I have seen a great while; I don't know any of our authors have wrote in so florid and genteel a style.

Wild. Upon the subject, madam, I dare affirm there is nothing extant more moving.—Look ye, madam, I am an author rich in expressions: the needy poets of the age may fill their works with rhapsodies of flames and darts, and barren sighs and tears, their speaking looks and amorous vows, that might, in Chaucer's time, perhaps, have passed for love; but now, 'tis only such as I can touch that noble passion, and by the true, persuasive eloquence, turned in the moving style

of louis d'ors, can raise the ravished female to a rapture.——In short, madam, I'll match Cowley in softness, o'ertop Milton in sublime, banter Cicero in eloquence, and Dr Swan in quibbling, by the help of that most ingenious society, called the Bank of England.

Lure. Ay, Sir Harry, I begin to hate that old thing called love; they say 'tis clear out in France.

Wild. Clear out, clear out; nobody wears it: and here too, honesty went out with the slashed doublets, and love with the close-bodied gowns. Love! 'tis so obsolete, so mean, and out of fashion, that I can compare it to nothing but the miserable picture of Patient Grizzel at the head of an old ballad——Faugh!

Lure. Ha, ha, ha!—The best emblem in the world.—Come, Sir Harry, faith we'll run it down.——Love!——Ay, methinks I see the mournful Melpomene, with her handkerchief at her eye, her heart full of fire, her eyes full of water, her head full of madness, and her mouth full of nonsense.——Oh, hang it.

Wild. Ay, madam. Then the doleful ditties, piteous plaints, the daggers, the poisons!

Lure. Oh, the vapours!

Wild. Then a man must kneel, and a man must swear——There is a repose, I see, in the next room. [*Aside.*

Lure. Unnatural stuff.

Wild. Oh, madam, the most unnatural thing in the world; as fulsome as a sack-posset, [*Pulling her towards the door*] ungenteel as a wedding-ring, and as impudent as the naked statue was in the Park. [*Pulls her again.*

Lure. Ay, Sir Harry; I hate love that's impudent. These poets dress it up so in their tragedies, that no modest woman can bear it. Your way is much the more tolerable, I must confess.

Wild. Ay, ay, madam; I hate your rude whining and sighing; it puts a lady out of countenance. [*Pulling her.*

Lure. Truly so it does.——Hang their impudence. But where are we going?

Wild. Only to rail at love, madam.

[*Pulls her in.*

Enter BANTER.

Ban. Hey! Who's here?

[LUREWELL *comes back.*

Lure. Pshaw! prevented by a stranger too! Had it been my husband now—Pshaw!—Very familiar, sir.

[BANTER *takes up* WILDAIR's *hat, that was dropped in the room.*

Ban. Madam, you have dropped your hat.

Lure. Discovered too by a stranger!—What shall I do?

Wild. [*From within.*]——Madam, you have got the most confounded pens here! Cann't you get the colonel to write the superscriptions of your letters for you?

Lure. Bless me, Sir Harry! don't you know that the colonel cann't write French? Your time is so precious!

Wild. Shall I direct by way of Roan or Paris?

Lure. Which you will.

Ban. Madam, I very much applaud your choice of a secretary; he understands the intrigues of most courts in Europe, they say.

Enter WILDAIR, *with a Letter.*

Wild. Here, madam, I presume 'tis right——This gentleman a relation of yours, madam?——Dem him. [*Aside.*

Ban. Brother, your humble servant.

Wild. Brother! by what relation, sir?

Ban. Begotten by the same father, born of the same mother, brother kindred, and brother beau.

Wild. Hey-day! how the fellow strings his genealogy!——Look ye, sir, you may be brother to Tom Thumb, for aught I know; but if you are my brother——I could have wished you in your mother's womb for an hour or two longer.

[*Aside.*

Ban. Sir, I received your letter at Oxford, with your commands to meet you in London; and if you can remember your own hand, there it is.

[*Gives a letter.*

Wild. [*Looking over the letter.*] Oh! pray, sir, let me consider you a little.——By Jupiter, a pretty boy, a very pretty boy; a handsome face, good shape,—[*Walks about, and views him*]—well dressed—The rogue has got a leg too.—Come, kiss me, child.——Ay, he kisses like one of the family; the right velvet lip.—Canst thou dance, child?

Ban. Ouy, monsieur.

Lure. Hey-day! French too; why sure, sir, you could never be bred at Oxford!

Ban. No, madam, my clothes were made in London—Brother, I have some affairs of consequence to communicate, which require a little privacy.

Lure. Oh, sir! I beg your pardon; I'll leave you. Sir Harry, you'll stay supper?

Wild. Assurement, madam.

Ban. Yes, madam, we'll both stay.

Wild. Both!—Sir, I'll send you back to your mutton-commons again. How now?

Ban. No, no; I shall find better mutton-commons by messing with you, brother——Come, Sir Harry; if you stay, I stay; if you go, allons.

Wild. Why, the devil's in this young fellow.—Why, sirrah, hast thou any thoughts of being my heir? Why, you dog, you ought to pimp for me; you should keep a pack of wenches o' purpose to hunt down matrimony. Don't you know, sir, that lawful wedlock in me is certain poverty to you? Look ye, sirrah, come along; and, for my disappointment just now, if you don't get me a new mistress to-night, I'll marry to-morrow, and won't leave you a groat.—Go, pimp, like a dutiful brother. [*Pushes him out, and exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Tavern.*

Enter FIREBALL, *hauling in* CLINCHER.

Fire. Come, sir; not drink the king's health!

Clin. Pray, now, good captain, excuse me. Look here, sir; [*Pulling out his watch*] the critical minute, the critical minute, faith.

Fire. What d'ye mean, sir?

Clin. The lady's critical minute, sir—Sir, your humble servant. [*Going.*

Fire. Well, the death of this Spanish king will——

Clin. [*Returning.*] Eh! what's that of the Spanish king? tell me, dear captain, tell me.

Fire. Sir, if you please to sit down, I'll tell you that old Don Carlos is dead.

Clin. Dead!—Nay, then—[*Sits down.*]---Here, pen and ink, boy; pen and ink presently; I must write to my correspondent in Wales straight—Dead! [*Rises, and walks about in disorder.*

Fire. What's the matter, sir?

Clin. Politics, politics, stark mad with politics.

Fire. 'Sdeath, sir, what have such fools as you to do with politics?

Clin. What, sir, the succession!—not mind the succession!

Fire. Nay, that's minded already; 'tis settled upon a prince of France.

Clin. What, settled already! the best news that ever came into England. Come, captain, faith and troth, captain, here's a health to the succession.

Fire. Burn the succession, sir. I won't drink it—What, drink confusion to our trade, religion, and liberties!

Clin. Ay, by all means—As for trade, d'ye see, I'm a gentleman, and hate it mortally. These tradesmen are the most impudent fellows we have, and spoil all our good manners. What have we to do with trade?

Fire. A trim politician truly!—And what do you think of our religion, pray?

Clin. Hi, hi, hi!—Religion!—And what has a gentleman to do with religion, pray? And to hear a sea captain talk of religion! that's pleasant, faith.

Fire. And have you no regard to our liberties, sir?

Clin. Pshaw! liberties! that's a jest. We beaus shall have liberty to whore and drink in any government, and that's all we care for.—

Enter STANDARD.

Dear colonel, the rarest news!

Stand. Damn your news, sir: why are you not drunk by this?

Clin. A very civil question, truly!

Stand. Here, boy, bring in the brandy—Fill.

Clin. This is a piece of politics that I don't so well comprehend.

Stand. Here, sir; now drink it off, or [*Draws* expect your throat cut.

Clin. Ay, this comes o' th' succession; fire and sword already.

Stand. Come, sir, off with it.

Clin. Pray, colonel, what have I done to be burned alive?

Stand. Drink, sir, I say—Brother, manage him: I must be gone. [*Aside to* FIREBALL, *and exit.*

Fire. Ay, drink, sir.

Clin. Eh! what the devil, attacked both by sea and land!—Look ye, gentlemen, if I must be poisoned, pray let me chuse my own dose. Were I a lord now, I should have the privilege of the block; and as I'm a gentleman, pray, stifle me with claret at least! don't let me die like a bawd, with brandy.

Fire. Brandy, you dog! abuse brandy! Flat treason against the navy royal!—Sirrah, I'll teach you to abuse the fleet—Here, Shark—

Enter SHARK.

Get three or four of the ship's crew, and press this fellow aboard the Belzebub.

Shark. Ay, master. [*Exit.*

Clin. What, aboard the Belzebub!—Nay, nay, dear captain, I'll chuse to go to the devil this way. Here, sir, your good health—and my own confusion, I'm afraid. [*Drinks it off.*] Oh, fire! fire! flames! brimstone! and tobacco!

[*Beats his stomach.*

Fire. Here, quench it, quench it, then—Take the glass, sir.

Clin. What, another broadside! nay, then, I'm sunk downright. Dear captain, give me quarter; consider the present juncture of affairs; you'll spoil my head, ruin my politics; faith you will.

Fire. Here, Shark!

Clin. Well, well, I will drink—The devil take Shark for me. [*Drinks.*] Whiz! buz!—Don't you hear it!—Put your ear to my breast, and hear how it whizzes like a hot iron—Eh! bless me, how the ship rolls!—I cann't stand upon my legs, faith——Dear captain, give me a kiss——Ay, burn the succession———Look ye, captain, I shall be sea-sick presently.

[*Falls into* FIREBALL'S *arms.*

Enter SHARK *and another, with a Chair.*

Fire. Here, in with him.

Shark. Ay, ay, sir——Avast, avast——Here, boy—No Nantz left——— [*Tops the glass.*

Fire. Bring him along.

Clin. Politics, politics, brandy, politics!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* LUREWELL'S *Apartment.*

Enter LUREWELL *and* PARLY.

Lure. Did you ever see such an impudent young rogue as that Banter? He followed his brother up and down from place to place so very close, that we could not so much as whisper.

Par. I reckon Sir Harry will dispose of him now, madam, where he may be secured. But I wonder, madam, why Clincher comes not, according to his letter; it is near the hour.

Lure. I wish, Parly, that no harm may befal me to-day; for I had a most frightful dream last night: I dream'd of a mouse.

Par. 'Tis strange, madam, you should be so much afraid of that little creature, that can do you no harm.

Lure. Look ye, girl, we women of quality have each of us some darling fright——I, now, hate a mouse; my lady Lovecards abhors a cat; Mrs Fiddlefan cann't bear a squirrel; the countess of Piquet abominates a frog; and my lady Swimair hates a man.

Enter MARQUIS, *running.*

Mar. Madam! madam! madam! Pardie voyez. ——L'argent! l'argent! [*Shews a bag of money.*

Lure. As I hope to breathe, he has got it! ——Well, but how, how, dear monsieur?

Mar. Ah, madame! begar, Monsieur Sir Arry be one pigeaneau—Voyez, madame! me did tell him dat my broder in Montpelier did furnise his lady wid ten tousan livres for de expence of her travaille; and dat she not being able to write when she was dying, did give him the picture for de certificate and de credential to receive de money from her husband—Mark ye!

Lure. The best plot in the world—You told him that your brother lent her the money in France, when her bills, I suppose, were delayed—You put in that, I presume?

Mar. Ouy, ouy, madame.

Lure. And that upon her death-bed she gave your brother the picture, as a certificate to Sir Harry that she had received the money; which picture your brother sent over to you, with commission to receive the debt.

Mar. Assurement—Dere was de politique, de France politique!———See, madame, what he can do, de France marquis! He did make de Anglise lady cuckle her husband when she was living, and sheat him when she was dead, begar. Ha, ha, ha!—Oh, pardie, c'est bon!

Lure. Ah! but what did Sir Harry say?

Mar. Oh, begar, Monsieur Chevalier he love his wife; he say, dat if she takes up a hundre tousan livres, he would repay it: he knew de picture, he say, and order me de money from his stewar—Oh, Notre Dame! Monsieur Sir Arry be one dupe.

Lure. Well, but, monsieur, I long to know one thing. Was the conquest you made of his lady so easy? What assaults did you make? and what resistance did she shew?

Mar. Resistance against de France marquis! Voyez, madame; dere was tree deux yeux, one serenade, and two capre; dat was all, begar.

Lure. Chatillionte! There's nothing in nature so sweet to a longing woman as a malicious story—Well, monsieur, 'tis about a thousand pound we go snacks.

Mar. Snacke! Pardie, for what? Why snacke, madam? Me vill give you de present of fifty louis d'ors; dat is ver' good snacke for you.

Lure. And you'll give me no more? Very well.

Mar. Ver' well! yes, begar, 'tis ver' well.—Consider, madame, me be de poor refugee; me 'ave nothing but de religious charité and de France politique, de fruit of my own address; dat is all.

Lure. Ay, an object of charity, with a thousand pounds in his fist!—Emh!—[*Knocking below.*]—Oh, monsieur, that's my husband! I know his knock. He must not see you. Get into the closet till by and by; [*Hurries him in*] and if I don't be revenged upon your France politique, then have I no English politique—Hang the money! I would not for twice a thousand pounds forbear abusing this virtuous woman to her husband.

Enter PARLY.

Par. 'Tis Sir Harry, madam.

Lure. As I could wish. Chairs!

Enter WILDAIR.

Wild. Here, Mrs Parly, in the first place, I sacrifice a louis d'or to thee for good luck.

Par. A guinea, sir, will do as well.

Wild. No, no, child; French money is always most successful in bribes, and very much in fashion, child.

Enter DICKY, *and runs to Sir* HARRY.

Dick. Sir, will you please to have your own night-caps?

Wild. Sirrah?

Dick. Sir, sir! shall I order your chair to the back-door by five o'clock in the morning?

Wild. The devil's in the fellow! Get you gone ——[DICKY *runs out.*] Now, dear madam, I have secured my brother, you have disposed of the colonel, and we'll rail at love till we ha'n't word more to say.

Lure. Ay, Sir Harry.—Please to sit a little, sir.—You must know I'm in a strange humour of asking you some questions.—How did you like your lady, pray, sir?

Wild. Like her! Ha, ha, ha!——So very well, faith, that for her very sake I'm in love with every woman I meet.

Lure. And did matrimony please you extremely?

Wild. So very much, that if polygamy were allowed, I would have a new wife every day.

Lure. Oh, Sir Harry, this is raillery! But your serious thoughts upon the matter, pray.

Wild. Why, then, madam, to give you my true sentiments of wedlock: I had a lady that I married by chance, she was virtuous by chance, and I loved her by great chance. Nature gave her beauty, education, and air, and fortune threw a young fellow of five-and-twenty in her lap. I courted her all day, loved her all night; she was my mistress one day, and my wife another; I found in one the variety of a thousand, and the very confinement of marriage gave me the pleasure of change.

Lure. And she was very virtuous?——

Wild. Look ye, madam, you know she was beautiful. She had good nature about her mouth, the smile of beauty in her cheeks, sparkling wit in her forehead, and sprightly love in her eyes.

Lure. Pshaw! I knew her very well; the woman was well enough. But you don't answer my question, sir.

Wild. So, madam, as I told you before, she was young and beautiful, I was rich and vigorous; my estate gave a lustre to my love, and a swing to our enjoyment; round, like the ring that made us one, our golden pleasures circled without end.

Lure. Golden pleasures! golden fiddlesticks! ——What d'ye tell me of your canting stuff?—Was she virtuous, I say?

Wild. Ready to burst with envy; but I will torment thee a little. [*Aside.*] So, madam, I powdered to please her, she dressed to engage me; we toyed away the morning in amorous nonsense, lolled away the evening in the Park or the playhouse, and all the night——Hem!

Lure. Look ye, sir, answer my question, or I shall take it ill.

Wild. Then, madam, there was never such a pattern of unity. Her wants were still prevented by my supplies; my own heart whispered me her desires, because she herself was there; no contention ever rose, but the dear strife of who should most oblige; no noise about authority; for neither would stoop to command, because both thought it glory to obey.

Lure. Stuff, stuff, stuff!—I won't believe a word on't.

Wild. Ha, ha, ha! Then, madam, we never felt the yoke of matrimony, because our inclinations made us one; a power superior to the forms of wedlock. The marriage torch had lost its weaker light in the bright flame of mutual love that joined our hearts before. Then——

Lure. Hold, hold, sir; I cannot bear it: Sir Harry, I'm affronted.

Wild. Ha, ha, ha! Affronted!

Lure. Yes, sir; it is an affront to any woman to hear another commended, and I will resent it.——In short, Sir Harry, your wife was a ——

Wild. Buz, madam—No detraction——I'll tell you what she was—So much an angel in her conduct, that though I saw another in her arms, I should have thought the devil had raised the phantom, and my more conscious reason had given my eyes the lie.

Lure. Very well! Then I an't to be believed, it seems. But d'ye hear, sir?

Wild. Nay, madam, do you hear? I tell you 'tis not in the power of malice to cast a blot upon her fame; and though the vanity of our sex, and the envy of yours, conspired both against her honour, I would not hear a syllable.

[*Stopping his ears.*

Lure. Why, then, as I hope to breathe, you shall hear it—The picture, the picture, the picture! [*Bawling aloud.*

Wild. Ran, tan, tan! A pistol-bullet from ear to ear.

Lure. That picture which you had just now from the French marquis for a thousand pounds, that very picture did your very virtuous wife send to the marquis, as a pledge of her very virtuous and dying affection. So that you are both robbed of your honour, and cheated of your money. [*Aloud.*

Wild. Louder, louder, madam.

Lure. I tell you, sir, your wife was a jilt; I know it, I'll swear it.—She virtuous! She was a devil.

Wild. [*Sings.*] Tal, lal, de ral.

Lure. Was ever the like seen! He won't hear me—I burst with malice, and now he won't mind me!—Won't you hear me yet?

Wild. No, no, madam.

Lure. Nay, then I cann't bear it. [*Bursts out a crying.*] Sir, I must say that you're an unworthy person, to use a woman of quality at this rate, when she has her heart full of malice; I don't know but it may make me miscarry. Sir, I say again and again, that she was no better than one of us, and I know it; I have seen it with my eyes, so I have.

Wild. Good Heavens deliver me, I beseech thee!——How shall I 'scape?

Lure. Will you not hear me yet? Dear Sir Harry, do but hear me; I'm longing to speak.

Wild. Oh, I have it!——Hush, hush, hush!

Lure. Eh! What's the matter?

Wild. A mouse! a mouse! a mouse!

Lure. Where, where, where?

Wild. Your petticoats, your petticoats, madam!—[LURE. *shrieks, and runs.*]—Oh, my head!—I was never worsted by a woman before.——But I have heard so much as to know the marquis to be a villain. [*Knocking.*] Nay, then, I must run for't. [*Runs out, and returns.*] The entry is stopped by a chair coming in; and something there is in that chair that I will discover, if I can find a place to hide myself. [*Goes to the closet door.*] Fast!—I have keys about me for most locks about St. James's—Let me see—[*Tries one key.*]—No, no; this opens my lady Plantlorn's back-door—[*Tries another.*]—Nor this; this is the key to my lady Stakeall's garden.—[*Tries a third.*]—Ay, ay, this does it, faith.

[*Goes into the closet, and peeps out.*

Enter SHARK, PARLY, *and another, with* CLINCHER *in a Chair.*

Par. Hold, hold, friend; who gave you orders to lug in your dirty chair into the house?

Shark. My master, sweet-heart.

Par. Who is your master, impudence?

Shark. Everybody, sauce-box——And for the present, here's my master; and if you have any thing to say to him, there he is for ye. [*Lugs* CLINCHER *out of the chair, and throws him upon the floor.*] Steer away, Tom.

[*Exit* SHARK, *with Chair.*

Wild. What the devil, Mr Jubilee, is it you?

Par. Bless me! the gentleman's dead!——Murder! murder!

Enter LUREWELL.

Lure. Protect me! What's the matter? Clincher!

Par. Mr Clincher, are you dead, sir?

Clin. Yes.

Lure. Oh, then it is well enough—Are you drunk, sir?

Clin. No.

Lure. Well, certainly I'm the most unfortunate woman living! All my affairs, all my designs, all my intrigues miscarry—Faugh! the beast!—But, sir, what's the matter with you?

Clin. Politics.

Par. Where have you been, sir?

Clin. Shark.

Lure. What shall we do with him, Parly?——If the colonel should come home now, we were ruined.——

Enter STANDARD.

Oh, inevitable destruction!

Wild. Ay, ay; unless I relieve her now, all the world cann't save her.

Stand. Bless me! what's here? Who are you, sir?

Clin. Brandy.

Stand. See there, madam!—behold the man that you prefer to me: and such as he are all those fop-gallants that daily haunt my house, ruin your honour, and disturb my quiet. I urge not the sacred bond of marriage; I'll wave your earnest vows of truth to me, and only lay the case in equal balance, and see whose merit bears the greater weight, his or mine.

Wild. Well argued, colonel. [*Aside.*

Stand. Suppose yourself freely disengaged, unmarried, and to make choice of him you thought most worthy of your love; would you prefer a brute, a monkey, one destin'd only for the sport of man?—Yes, take him to your bed; there let the beast disgorge his fulsome load in your fair, lovely bosom, snore out his passion in your soft embrace, and with the vapours of his sick debauch perfume your sweet apartment.

Lure. Ah, nauseous, nauseous, poison!

Stand. I ne'er was taught to set a value on myself; but when compared to him, there modesty must stoop, and indignation give my words a loose, to tell you, madam, that I am a man unblemished in my honour, have nobly served my king and country; and for a lady's service, I think that nature has not been defective.

Wild. 'Egad, I should think so too; the fellow's well made. [*Aside.*

Stand. I'm young as he, my person too as fair to outward view; and for my mind, I thought it could distinguish right, and therefore made a choice of you. Your sex have bless'd our isle with beauty, by distant nations priz'd; and could they place their loves aright, their lovers might acquire the envy of mankind, as well as they the wonder of the world.

Wild. Ah! now he coaxes——He will conquer, unless I relieve her in time; she begins to melt already. [*Aside.*

Stand. Add to all this, I love you next to heaven; and by that heaven I swear, the constant study of my days and nights has been to please my dearest wife. Your pleasure never met controul from me, nor your desires a frown.—I never mentioned my distrust before, nor will I now wrong your discretion, so as e'er to think you made him an appointment.

Lure. Generous, generous man! [*Weeps.*

Wild. Nay, then, 'tis time for me; I will relieve her. [*He steals out of the closet, and coming behind* STANDARD, *claps him on the shoulder.*] Colonel, your humble servant.

Stand. Sir Harry, how came you hither?

Wild. Ah, poor fellow! thou hast got thy load with a witness: but the wine was humming strong: I have got a touch on't myself.

[*Reels a little.*

Stand. Wine, Sir Harry! What wine?

Wild. Why, 'twas new Burgundy, heady stuff. But the dog was soon gone, knock'd under presently.

Stand. What, then Mr Clincher was with you, it seems? Eh!

Wild. Yes, faith; we have been together all this afternoon: 'tis a pleasant foolish fellow. He would needs give me a welcome to town, on pretence of hearing all the news from the jubilee. The humour was new to me; so to't we went. But 'tis a weak-headed coxcomb; two or three bumpers did his business——Ah! madam! what do I deserve for this? [*Aside to* LURE.

Lure. Look ye there, sir; you see how Sir Harry has cleared my innocence——I'm obliged t'ye, sir; but I must leave you to make it out.

[*To* WILD. *and ex.*

Stand. Yes, yes; he has cleared you wonderfully—But, pray, sir—I suppose you can inform me how Mr Clincher came into my house? Eh!

Wild. Ay—Why, you must know that the fool got presently as drunk as a drum; so I had him tumbled into a chair, and ordered the fellows to carry him home. Now, you must know, he lodges but three doors off; but the boobies, it seems, mistook the door, and brought him in here, like a brace of loggerheads.

Stand. Oh yes; sad loggerheads! to mistake a door in James's Street, for a house in Covent-Garden——Here—

Enter Servants.

Take away that brute.—[*Servants carry off* CLINCH.]—And you say 'twas new Burgundy, Sir Harry; very strong.

Wild. 'Egad, there's some trick in this matter, and I shall be discovered. [*Aside.*] Ay, colonel—but I must be gone; I am engaged to meet ——Colonel, I'm your humble servant.

[*Going.*

Stand. But, Sir Harry, where's your hat, sir?

Wild. Oh, morbleu!—These hats, gloves, canes, and swords, are the ruin of all our designs. [*Aside.*

Stand. But where's your hat, Sir Harry?

Wild. I'll never intrigue again with any thing about me but what is just bound to my body. How shall I come off?——Hark ye, colonel; in your ear; I would not have your lady hear it—You must know, just as I came into the room here, what should I spy but a great mouse running across that closet door: I took no notice, for fear your lady should be frightened, but, with all my force, (d'ye see?) I flung my hat at it, and so threw it into the closet, and there it lies.

Stand. And so, thinking to kill the mouse, you flung your hat into that closet.

Wild. Ay, ay, that was all; I'll go fetch it.

Stand. No, Sir Harry, I'll bring it out.

[*Goes into the closet.*

Wild. Now have I told a matter of twenty lies in a breath.

Re-enter STANDARD, *with the Hat in one hand, and hauling in the Marquis with the other.*

Stand. Sir Harry, is this the mouse that you threw your hat at?

Wild. I'm amaz'd!

Mar. Pardie, I'm amaze too!

Stand. Look'e, Monsieur Marquis, as for your part, I shall cut your throat, sir.

Wild. Give me leave; I must cut his throat first.

Mar. Vat, bote cut my troat! Begar, messieurs, I ave but one troat.

Enter PARLY, *and runs to* STANDARD.

Par. Sir, the monsieur is innocent; he came upon another design. My lady begins to be penitent, and, if you make any noise, 'twill spoil all.

Stand. Look'e, gentlemen, I have too great a confidence in the virtue of my wife, to think it in the power of you, or you, sir, to wrong my honour. But I am bound to guard her reputation, so that no attempts be made that may provoke a scandal. Therefore, gentlemen, let me tell you it is time to desist. [*Exit.*

Wild. Ay, ay; so it is, faith. Come, monsieur, I must talk with you, sir. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—STANDARD'S *House.*

Enter STANDARD *and* FIREBALL.

Stand. In short, brother, a man may talk till doomsday of sin, hell, and damnation; but your rhetoric will ne'er convince a lady that there's any thing of a devil in a handsome fellow with a fine coat. You must shew the cloven foot, expose the brute, as I have done; and though her virtue sleeps, her pride will surely take the alarm.

Fire. Ay, but if you had let me cut off one of the rogue's ears before you sent him away——

Stand. No, no; the fool has served my turn, without the scandal of a public resentment; and the effect has shewn that my design was right: I've touch'd her very heart, and she relents apace.

Enter LUREWELL, *running.*

Lure. Oh, my dear, save me! I'm frightened out of my life.

Fire. Blood and fire, madam, who dare touch you? [*Draws his sword, and stands before her.*

Lure. Oh, sir, a ghost, a ghost! I have seen it twice.

Fire. Nay, then, we soldiers have nothing to do with ghosts; send for the parson.

[*Sheaths his sword.*

Stand. 'Tis fancy, my dear, nothing but fancy.

Lure. Oh, dear colonel, I'll never lie alone again; I'm frightened to death; I saw it twice; twice it stalked by my chamber-door, and, with a hollow voice, uttered a piteous groan.

Stand. This is strange! ghosts by day-light!—Come, my dear, along with me; don't shrink, we'll see to find this ghost. [*Exunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Street.*

Enter WILDAIR, MARQUIS, *and* DICKY.

Wild. Dicky.

Dick. Sir.

Wild. Do you remember any thing of a thousand pounds lent to my wife in Montpelier by a French gentleman?

Mar. Ouy, Monsieur Dicky, you remembre de gentleman; he was one marquis.

Dick. Marqui, sir! I think, for my part, that all the men in France are marqui's. We met above a thousand marqui's, but the devil o' one of them could lend a thousand pence, much less a thousand pounds.

Mar. Morbleu, que dites vous, bougre le chien?

Wild. Hold, sir; pray, answer me one question——What made you fly your country?

Mar. My religion, monsieur.

Wild. So you fled from your religion out of France, and are a downright atheist in England. A very tender conscience, truly!

Mar. Begar, monsieur, my conscience be de ver' tendre; he no suffre his mastre to starve, pardie.

Wild. Come, sir, no ceremony; refund.

Mar. Refunde! Vat is dat refunde? Parlez François, monsieur?

Wild. No, sir; I tell you, in plain English, return my money, or I'll lay you by the heels.

Mar. Oh, begar, dere is de Anglis-man now! Dere is de law for me. De law! Ecoute, monsieur Sir Arry—Voyez sa—De France marquis scorn de law. My broder lend your vife de money, and here is my witness. [*Draws.*

Wild. Your evidence, sir, is very positive, and shall be examined; but this is no place to try the cause: we'll cross the Park into the fields; you shall throw down the money between us, and the best title, upon a fair hearing, shall take it up——Allons!

Mar. Oh, de tout mon cœur!——Allons! Fient à la tête, begar. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—LUREWELL'S *Apartment.*

Enter LUREWELL *and* PARLY.

Lure. Pshaw! I'm such a frighted fool! 'Twas nothing but fancy——Come, Parly, get me pen and ink; I'll divert it. Sir Harry shall know what a wife he had, I'm resolved. Though he would not hear me speak, he'll read my letter, sure. [*Sits down to write.*

Ghost. [*From within.*] Hold!

Lure. Protect me!——Parly, don't leave me—But I won't mind it.

Ghost. Hold!

Lure. Defend me! Don't you hear a voice?

Par. I thought so, madam.

Lure. It called, Hold! I'll venture once more. [*Sits down to write.*

Ghost. Disturb no more the quiet of the dead.

Lure. Now it is plain. I heard the words.

Par. Deliver us, madam, and forgive us our sins!—What is it?

Enter Ghost; LUREWELL *and* PARLY *shriek, and run to a corner of the Stage.*

Ghost. Behold the airy form of wrong'd Angelica,
Forc'd from the shades below, to vindicate her fame.
Forbear, malicious woman, thus to load
With scandalous reproach the grave of innocence.
Repent, vain woman!
Thy matrimonial vow is register'd above,
And all the breaches of that solemn faith
Are register'd below. I'm sent to warn thee to repent.
Forbear to wrong thy injur'd husband's bed;
Disturb no more the quiet of the dead. [*Stalks off.*

[LUREWELL *swoons, and* PARLY *supports her.*

Par. Help! help! help!

Enter STANDARD *and* FIREBALL.

Stand. Bless us! What, fainting! What's the matter?

Fire. Breeding, breeding, sir.

Par. Oh, sir! we're frightened to death: here has been the ghost again.

Stand. Ghost! why you're mad, sure! What ghost?

Par. The ghost of Angelica, Sir Harry Wildair's wife.

Stand. Angelica!

Par. Yes, sir; and here it preached to us the Lord knows what, and murdered my mistress with mere morals.

Fire. A good hearing, sir; 'twill do her good.

Stand. Take her in, Parly. [PARLY *leads out* LUREWELL.] What can this mean, brother?

Fire. The meaning's plain. There's a design of communication between your wife and Sir Harry; so his wife is come to forbid the banns, that's all.

Stand. No, no, brother. If I may be induced to believe the walking of ghosts, I rather fancy that the rattle-headed fellow her husband has broke the poor lady's heart, which, together with the indignity of her burial, has made her uneasy in her grave.—But whatever be the cause, it's fit we immediately find out Sir Harry, and inform him. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*The Park. Company walking.* WILDAIR *and Marquis passing hastily over the Stage, one calls.*

Lord. Sir Harry.

Wild. My lord?—Monsieur, I'll follow you, sir. [*Exit Marquis.*

Lord. I must talk with you, sir.

Wild. Pray, my lord, let it be very short, for I was never in more haste in my life.

Lord. May I presume, sir, to enquire the cause that detained you so late last night at my house?

Wild. More mischief again?—Perhaps, my lord, I may not presume to inform you.

Lord. Then, perhaps, sir, I may presume to extort it from you.

Wild. Look ye, my lord, don't frown; it spoils your face.——But if you must know, your lady owes me two hundred guineas, and that sum I will presume to extort from your lordship.

Lord. Two hundred guineas! Have you any thing to shew for it?

Wild. Ha, ha, ha!—Shew for it, my lord; I shewed quint and quatorze for it; and to a man of honour, that's as firm as a bond and judgment.

Lord. Come, sir, this won't pass upon me; I'm a man of honour.

Wild. Honour! ha, ha, ha!—'Tis very strange that some men, though their education be ever so gallant, will ne'er learn breeding! Look ye, my lord, when you and I were under the tuition

of our governors, and conversed only with old Cicero, Livy, Virgil, Plutarch, and the like; why, then such a man was a villain, and such a one was a man of honour: but now, that I have known the court, a little of what they call the *beau monde* and the *bel esprit*, I find that honour looks as ridiculous as Roman buskins upon your lordship, or my full peruke upon Scipio Africanus.

Lord. Why should you think so, sir?

Wild. Because the world's improved, my lord, and we find that this honour is a very troublesome and impertinent thing—Cann't we live together like good neighbours and Christians, as they do in France? I lend you my coach, I borrow yours; you dine with me, I sup with you; I lie with your wife, and you lie with mine.—Honour! that's such an impertinence!—Pray, my lord, hear me. What does your honour think of murdering your friend's reputation; making a jest of his misfortunes; cheating him at cards; debauching his bed; or the like?

Lord. Why, rank villainy.

Wild. Pish! pish! nothing but good manners; excess of good manners. Why, you ha'n't been at court lately. There, 'tis the only practice to shew our wit and breeding——as, for instance: your friend reflects upon you when absent, because 'tis good manners; rallies you when present, because 'tis witty; cheats you at piquet, to shew he has been in France; and lies with your wife, to shew he's a man of quality.

Lord. Very well, sir.

Wild. In short, my lord, you have a wrong notion of things. Should a man with a handsome wife revenge all affronts done to his honour, poor White, Chaves, Morris, Locket, Pawlet, and Pontack, were utterly ruined.

Lord. How so, sir?

Wild. Because, my lord, you must run all their customers quite through the body. Were it not for abusing your men of honour, taverns and chocolate-houses could not subsist; and were there but a round tax laid upon scandal and false politics, we men of figure would find it much heavier than four shillings in the pound.—Come, come, my lord; no more on't: for shame; your honour is safe enough, for I have the key of its back-door in my pocket. [*Runs off.*

Lord. Sir, I shall meet you another time. [*Exit.*

SCENE V.—*The Fields.*

Enter Marquis, with a Servant, carrying his fighting equipage, pumps, cap, &c. He dresses himself accordingly, and flourishes about the Stage.

Mar. Sa, sa, sa, fient à la tête. Sa, embaracade: quart sur redouble. Hey!

Enter WILDAIR.

Wild. Ha, ha, ha!—The devil! must I fight with a tumbler? These French are as great fops in their quarrels as in their amours.

Mar. Allons! allons! stripe, stripe!

Wild. No, no, sir, I never strip to engage a man; I fight as I dance.——Come, sir, down with the money.

Mar. Dere it is, pardie. [*Lays down the bag between them.*] Allons!

Enter DICKY, *and gives* WILDAIR *a gun.*

Morbleu! que sa?

Wild. Now, monsieur, if you offer to stir, I'll shoot you through the head.—Dicky, take up the money, and carry it home.

Dick. Here it is, faith; and if my master be killed, the money's my own.

Mar. Oh, morbleu! de Anglis-man be one coward.

Wild. Ha, ha, ha!—Where is your French politique now? Come, monsieur, you must know I scorn to fight any man for my own; but now we're upon the level; and since you have been at the trouble of putting on your habiliments, I must requite your pains. So, come on, sir.

[*Lays down the gun, and uses his sword.*

Mar. Come on! For vat, wen de money is gone? De France-man fight vere dere is no profit! Pardonnez moi, pardie.

[*Sits down to pull off his pumps.*

Wild. Hold, hold, sir; you must fight. Tell me how you came by this picture?

Mar. [*Starting up.*] Why, den, begar, Monsieur Chevalier, since de money be gone, me vill speak de verite.—Pardie, monsieur, me did make de cuckle of you, and your vife send me de picture for my pain.

Wild. Look ye, sir, if I thought you had merit enough to gain a lady's heart from me, I would shake hands immediately, and be friends; but as I believe you to be a vain, scandalous liar, I'll cut your throat. [*They fight.*

Enter STANDARD *and* FIREBALL, *who part them.*

Stand. Hold, hold, gentlemen.—Brother, secure the marquis.—Come, Sir Harry, put up; I have something to say to you very serious.

Wild. Say it quickly then; for I am a little out of humour, and want something to make me laugh.

[*As they talk, Marquis dresses, and* FIREBALL *helps him.*

Stand. Will what's very serious make you laugh?

Wild. Most of all.

Stand. Pshaw! pray, Sir Harry, tell me what made you leave your wife?

Wild. Ha, ha, ha!—I knew it.——Pray, colonel, what makes you stay with your wife?

Stand. Nay, but pray answer me directly; I beg it as a favour.

Wild. Why then, colonel, you must know we were a pair of the most happy, toying, foolish people in the world, till she got, I don't know how, a crotchet of jealousy in her head. This made her frumpish; but we had ne'er an angry

word: she only fell a crying over night, and I went for Italy next morning.—But, pray, no more on't.——Are you hurt, monsieur?

Stand. But, Sir Harry, you'll be serious when I tell you that her ghost appears.

Wild. Her ghost! Ha, ha, ha! that's pleasant, faith.

Stand. As sure as fate, it walks in my house.

Wild. In your house! Come along, colonel; by the lard I'll kiss it.

[*Exeunt* WILD. *and* STAND.

Mar. Monsieur le Captain, adieu.

Fire. Adieu! No, sir, you shall follow Sir Harry.

Mar. For vat?

Fire. For what! why, dy'e think I'm such a rogue as to part a couple of gentlemen when they're fighting, and not see them make an end on't?—I think it a less sin to part man and wife.——Come along, sir.

[*Exit, pulling Monsieur.*

SCENE VI.—STANDARD'S *House.*

Enter WILDAIR *and* STANDARD.

Wild. Well then; this, it seems, is the enchanted chamber. The ghost has pitched upon a handsome apartment, however.—Well, colonel, when do you intend to begin?

Stand. What, sir?

Wild. To laugh at me; I know you design it.

Stand. Ha! by all that's powerful, there it is.

[*Ghost walks across the stage.*

Wild. The devil it is——Emh! Blood! I'll speak to't.——Vous, Mademoiselle Ghost, parlez vous François?—No! hark ye, Mrs Ghost, will your ladyship be pleased to inform us who you are, that we may pay you the respect due to your quality. [*Ghost returns.*

Ghost. I am the spirit of thy departed wife.

Wild. Are you, faith? Why, then here's the body of thy living husband, and stand me if you dare.—[*Runs to her, and embraces her.*]——Ha! 'tis substance, I'm sure.—But hold, Lady Ghost, stand off a little, and tell me, in good earnest now, whether you are alive or dead.

Ang. [*Throwing off her shroud.*]—Alive! alive! [*Runs and throws her arms about his neck*] and never lived so much as in this moment!

Wild. What d'ye think of the ghost now, colonel? [*She hangs upon him.*] Is it not a very loving ghost?

Stand. Amazement!

Wild. Ay, 'tis amazement, truly.——Look ye, madam, I hate to converse so familiarly with spirits: pray keep your distance.

Ang. I am alive, indeed I am.

Wild. I don't believe a word on't.

[*Moving away.*

Stand. Sir Harry, you're more afraid now than before.

Wild. Ay, most men are more afraid of a living wife than a dead one.

Stand. 'Tis good manners to leave you together, however. [*Exit.*

Ang. 'Tis unkind, my dear, after so long and tedious an absence, to act the stranger so. I now shall die in earnest, and must for ever vanish from your sight. [*Weeping, and going.*

Wild. Hold, hold, madam. Don't be angry, my dear; you took me unprovided: had you but sent me word of your coming, I had got three or four speeches out of Oroonoko and the Mourning Bride upon this occasion, that would have charmed your very heart. But we'll do as well as we can: I'll have the music from both houses; Pawlet and Locket shall contrive for our taste; we'll charm our ears with Abel's voice; feast our eyes with one another; and thus, with all our senses tuned to love, we'll hurl off our clothes, leap into bed, and there——Look ye, madam, if I don't welcome you home with raptures more natural, and more moving, than all the plays in Christendom—I'll say no more.

Ang. As mad as ever.

Wild. But ease my wonder first, and let me know the riddle of your death.

Ang. Your unkind departure hence, and your avoiding me abroad, made me resolve, since I could not live with you, to die to all the world besides: I fancied, that though it exceeded the force of love, yet the power of grief, perhaps, might change your humour, and therefore had it given out that I died in France. My sickness at Montpelier, which indeed was next to death, and the affront offered to the body of our ambassador's chaplain at Paris, conduced to have my burial private. This deceived my retinue; and by the assistance of my woman, and your faithful servant, I got into man's clothes, came home into England, and sent him to observe your motions abroad, with orders not to undeceive you till your return.——Here I met you in the quality of Beau Banter, your busy brother, under which disguise I have disappointed your views upon my lady Lurewell; and, in the form of a ghost, have revenged the scandal she this day threw upon me, and have frightened her sufficiently from lying alone. I did resolve to have frightened you likewise, but you were too hard for me.

Wild. How weak, how squeamish, and how fearful are women, when they want to be humoured! and how extravagant, how daring, and how provoking, when they get the impertinent maggot in their head!—But by what means, my dear, could you purchase this double disguise? How came you by my letter to my brother?

Ang. By intercepting all your letters since I came home. But for my ghostly contrivance, good Mrs Parly, (moved by the justness of my cause, and a bribe,) was my chief engineer.

Enter FIREBALL *and Marquis.*

Fire. Sir Harry, if you have a mind to fight it out, there's your man; if not, I have discharged my trust.

Wild. Oh, monsieur! Won't you salute your mistress, sir?

Mar. Oh, morbleu! Begar, me must run to some oder country now for my religion.

Ang. Oh! what, the French marquis! I know him.

Wild. Ay, ay, my dear, you do know him, and I cann't be angry, because 'tis the fashion for ladies to know every body: but methinks, madam, that picture now! Hang it, considering 'twas my gift, you might have kept it—But no matter; my neighbours shall pay for't.

Ang. Picture, my dear! Could you think I e'er would part with that? No; of all my jewels, this alone I kept, because 'twas given by you.

[*Shews the picture.*

Wild. Eh! Wonderful!——And what's this?

[*Pulling out t'other picture.*

Ang. They're very much alike.

Wild. So alike, that one might fairly pass for t'other.——Monsieur Marquis, *ecoutez.*——You did lie wid my vife, and she did give you de picture for your pain. Eh! Come, sir, add to your France politique a little of your native impudence, and tell us plainly how you came by't.

Mar. Begar, Monsieur Chevalier, wen de France-man can tell no more lie, den vill he tell trute.——I was acquainted wid de paintre dat draw your lady's picture, an I give him ten pistole for de copy.——An so me ave de picture of all de beauty in London; and by this politique, me ave de reputation to lie wid dem all.

Wild. When, perhaps, your pleasure never reached above a pit-masque in your life.

Mar. An begar, for dat matre, de natre of women, a pit-masque is as good as de best. De pleasure is nothing, de glory is all—a-la-mode de France. [*Struts out.*

Wild. Go thy ways for a true pattern of the vanity, impertinence, subtlety, and the ostentation of thy country!—Look ye, captain, give me thy hand: once I was a friend to France; but henceforth I promise to sacrifice my fashions, coaches, wigs, and vanity, to horses, arms, and equipage, and serve my king *in propria persona*, to promote a vigorous war, if there be occasion.

Fire. Bravely said, Sir Harry: and if all the beaus in the side-boxes were of your mind, we would send them back their L'Abbé and Balon, and shew them a new dance, to the tune of Harry the Fifth.

Enter STANDARD, LUREWELL, DICKY, *and* PARLY.

Wild. Oh, colonel! Such discoveries!

Stand. Sir, I have heard all from your servant; honest Dicky has told me the whole story.

Wild. Why, then, let Dicky run for the fiddles immediately.

Dick. Oh, sir! I knew what it would come to; they're here already, sir.

Wild. Then, colonel, we'll have a new wedding, and begin it with a dance——Strike up.

[*A dance here.*

Stand. Now, Sir Harry, we have retrieved our wives; yours from death, and mine from the devil; and they are at present very honest: but how shall we keep them so?

Ang. By being good husbands, sir; and the great secret for keeping matters right in wedlock, is never to quarrel with your wives for trifles; for we are but babies at best, and must have our play-things, our longings, our vapours, our frights, our monkies, our china, our fashions, our washes, our patches, our waters, our tattle and impertinence; therefore, I say, 'tis better to let a woman play the fool, than provoke her to play the devil.

Lure. And another rule, gentlemen, let me advise you to observe,—never to be jealous; or if you should, be sure never to let your wife think you suspect her: for we are more restrained by the scandal of the lewdness, than by the wickedness of the fact; when once a woman has borne the shame of a whore, she'll dispatch you the sin in a moment.

Wild. We're obliged to you, ladies, for your advice; and in return, give me leave to give you the definition of a good wife, in the character of my own. The wit of her conversation never outstrips the conduct of her behaviour; she's affable to all men, free with no man, and only kind to me; often chearful, sometimes gay, and always pleased, but when I'm angry; then sorry, not sullen. The Park, play-house, and cards, she frequents in compliance with custom; but her diversions of inclination are at home: she's more cautious of a remarkable woman than of a noted wit, well knowing that the infection of her own sex is more catching than the temptation of ours to all this, she is beautiful to a wonder, scorns all devices that engage a gallant, and uses all arts to please her husband.

So, spite of satire 'gainst a married life,
A man is truly blest with such a wife.

EPILOGUE.

BY A FRIEND.

VENTRE bleu! vere is dis damn poet? vere?
Garçon! me vil cut off all his two ear:
Je suis enragé——now he is not here.
He has affront de French! Le vilaine bête!
De French! your best friend!——you suffre dat?
Parbleu! Messieurs, il serait fort ingrate!

Vat have you English dat you can call your own?
Vat have you of grand pleasure in dis town,
Vidout it come from France, dat vil go down?
Picquet, basset; your vin, your dress, your dance;
'Tis all, you see, tout à-la-mode de France.
De beau dere buy a hondre knick-knack;
He carry out wit, but seldom bring it back:
But den he bring a snuff-box hinge, so small
De joint you can no see de vark at all,
Cost him five pistoles, dat is sheap enough,
In tree year it sal save half an ounce of snuffe.
De coquet, she ave her ratifia dere,
Her gown, her complexion, deux yeux, her lovere.
As for de cuckold——dat indeed you can make here.
De French it is dat teach the lady wear
De short muff, wit her vite elbow bare;
De beau de large muff, wit his sleeve down dere. *
Ve teach your vifes to ope dere husband's purses,
To put de furbelo round dere coach and dere horses.
Garçon! ve teach you every ting de varle;
For vy den you damn poet dare to snarle?—
Begar, me vil be revenge upon his play:
Tree tousan refugée (parbleu c'est vrai)
Shall all come here, and damn him upon his tird day.

* Pointing to his fingers.

THE

INCONSTANT.

BY FARQUHAR.

PROLOGUE.

LIKE hungry guests a sitting audience looks:
Plays are like suppers: poets are the cooks:
The founders you: the table is this place:
The carvers we: the prologue is the grace:
Each act, a course; each scene, a different dish:
Though we're in Lent, I doubt you're still for flesh:
Satire's the sauce, high-season'd, sharp, and rough;
Kind masks and beaux, I hope you're pepper-proof:
Wit is the wine; but 'tis so scarce the true,
Poets, like vintners, balderdash and brew.
Your surly scenes, where rant and bloodshed join,
Are butcher's meat; a battle's a sirloin:
Your scenes of love, so flowing, soft, and chaste,
Are water-gruel, without salt or taste.
Bawdy's fat venison, which, though stale, can please;
Your rakes love haut-goûts, like your damn'd French cheese.
Your rarity, for the fair guest to gape on,
Is your nice squeaker, or Italian capon;
Or your French virgin-pullet, garnish'd round,
And dress'd with sauce of some——four hundred pound.
An opera, like an oglio, nicks the age:
Farce is the hasty-pudding of the stage;
For when you're treated with indifferent cheer,
You can dispense with slender stage-coach fare.
A pastoral's whipt cream; stage-whims, mere trash;
And tragi-comedy, half fish and flesh:
But comedy! that, that's the darling cheer,
This night we hope you'll all inconstant bear:
Wild fowl is lik'd in play-house all the year.
Yet since each mind betrays a diff'rent taste,
And every dish scarce pleases ev'ry guest,
If aught you relish, do not damn the rest.
This favour crav'd, up let the music strike:
You're welcome all——now fall to, where you like.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Old MIRABEL, *an aged Gentleman, of an odd compound, between the peevishness incident to his years, and his fatherly fondness towards his son.*

Young MIRABEL.

Captain DURETETE, *an honest, good-natured fellow, that thinks himself a greater fool than he is.*

DUGARD.

PETIT, *Servant to* DUGARD, *afterwards to his sister.*

WOMEN.

ORIANA, *a Lady contracted to* MIRABEL, *who would bring him to reason.*

BISARRE, *a whimsical Lady, friend to* ORIANA, *admired by* DURETETE.

LAMORCE, *a woman of contrivance.*

Four Bravoes, two Gentlemen, and two Ladies, Soldiers, Servants, and Attendants.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Street.*

Enter DUGARD *and his man* PETIT, *in Riding-habits.*

Dug. Sirrah, what's o'clock?

Pet. Turn'd of eleven, sir.

Dug. No more! we have rid a swinging pace from Nemours since two this morning! Petit, run to Rousseau's, and bespeak a dinner at a louis d'or a head, to be ready by one.

Pet. How many will there be of you, sir?

Dug. Let me see——Mirabel one, Duretete two, myself three——

Pet. And I four.

Dug. How now, sir, at your old travelling familiarity! When abroad, you had some freedom for want of better company; but among my friends at Paris, pray remember your distance——Be gone, sir. [*Exit* PETIT.] This fellow's wit was necessary abroad, but he's too cunning for a domestic; I must dispose of him some way else. Who's here? Old Mirabel and my sister!—My dearest sister!

Enter Old MIRABEL *and* ORIANA.

Ori. My brother! Welcome.

Dug. Monsieur Mirabel! I'm heartily glad to see you.

Old Mir. Honest Mr Dugard! by the blood of the Mirabels, I'm your most humble servant.

Dug. Why, sir, you've cast your skin sure; you're brisk and gay, lusty health about you, no signs of age but your silver hairs.

Old Mir. Silver hairs! Then they are quicksilver hairs, sir. Whilst I have golden pockets, let my hairs be silver an they will. Adsbud, sir, I can dance, and sing, and drink, and——no, I cann't wench.—But, Mr Dugard, no news of my son Bob in all your travels?

Dug. Your son's come home, sir.

Old Mir. Come home! Bob come home! By the blood of the Mirabels, Mr Dugard, what say ye?

Ori. Mr Mirabel return'd, sir!

Dug. He's certainly come, and you may see him within this hour or two.

Old Mir. Swear it, Mr Dugard, presently swear it.—

Dug. Sir, he came to town with me this morning; I left him at the Bagnieurs, being a little disordered after riding, and I shall see him again presently.

Old Mir. What! and he was asham'd to ask a blessing with his boots on? A nice dog! Well, and how fares the young rogue, ha?

Dug. A fine gentleman, sir. He'll be his own messenger.

Old Mir. A fine gentleman! But is the rogue like me yet?

Dug. Why, yes, sir; he's very like his mother, and as like you as most modern sons are to their fathers.

Old Mir. Why, sir, don't you think that I begat him?

Dug. Why, yes, sir; you married his mother, and he inherits your estate. He's very like you, upon my word.

Ori. And pray, brother, what's become of his honest companion, Duretete?

Dug. Who, the captain? The very same he went abroad; he's the only Frenchman I ever knew that could not change. Your son, Mr Mirabel, is more obliged to Nature for that fellow's composition than for his own; for he's more happy in Duretete's folly than his own wit. In short, they are as inseparable as finger and thumb; but the first instance in the world, I believe, of opposition in friendship.

Old Mir. Very well; will he be home to dinner, think ye?

Dug. Sir, he has ordered me to bespeak a dinner for us at Rousseau's, at a louis d'or a head.

Old Mir. A louis d'or a head! Well said, Bob; by the blood of the Mirabels, Bob's improv'd. But, Mr Dugard, was it so civil of Bob to visit Monsieur Rousseau before his own natural father, eh? Hark'e, Oriana, what think you, now, of a fellow that can eat and drink ye a whole louis d'or at a sitting? He must be as strong as Hercules; life and spirit in abundance. Before Gad, I don't wonder at those men of quality, that their own wives cann't serve them. A louis d'or a head! 'tis enough to stock the whole nation with bastards, 'tis, faith. Mr Dugard, I leave you with your sister. [*Exit.*

Dug. Well, sister, I need not ask you how you do; your looks resolve me: fair, tall, well-shaped! you're almost grown out of my remembrance.

Ori. Why, truly, brother, I look pretty well, thank Nature and my toilet: I have 'scaped the jaundice, green sickness, and the small-pox; I eat three meals a day, am very merry when up, and sleep soundly when I'm down.

Dug. But, sister, you remember that upon my going abroad, you would choose this old gentleman for your guardian; he's no more related to our family than Prester John; and I have no reason to think you mistrusted my management of your fortune: therefore, pray be so kind as to tell me, without reservation, the true cause of making such a choice.

Ori. Look'e, brother, you were going a rambling, and 'twas proper, lest I should go a rambling too, that somebody should take care of me. Old Monsieur Mirabel is an honest gentleman, was our father's friend, and has a young lady in his house, whose company I like, and who has chosen him for her guardian as well as I.

Dug. Who, Mademoiselle Bisarre?

Ori. The same: we live merrily together, without scandal or reproach; we make much of the old gentleman between us, and he takes care of us; we eat what we like, go to bed when we please, rise when we will, all the week we dance and sing, and upon Sundays go first to church, and then to the play. Now, brother, besides these motives for choosing this gentleman for my guardian, perhaps I had some private reasons.

Dug. Not so private as you imagine, sister: your love to young Mirabel's no secret, I can assure you, but so public, that all your friends are asham'd on't.

Ori. O' my word, then, my friends are very bashful; though I am afraid, sir, that those people are not ashamed enough at their own crimes, who have so many blushes to spare for the faults of their neighbours.

Dug. Ay, but, sister, the people say——

Ori. Pshaw! hang the people, they'll talk treason, and profane their Maker; must we therefore infer, that our king is a tyrant, and religion a cheat? Look'e, brother, their court of inquiry is a tavern, and their informer, claret; they think as they drink, and swallow reputations like loches; a lady's health goes briskly round with the glass, but her honour is lost in the toast.

Dug. Ay, but, sister, there is still something——

Ori. If there be something, brother, 'tis none of the people's something; marriage is my thing, and I'll stick to't.

Dug. Marriage! Young Mirabel marry! He'll build churches sooner. Take heed, sister, though your honour stood proof to his home-bred assaults, you must keep a stricter guard for the future: he has now got the foreign air and the Italian softness; his wit's improved by converse, his behaviour finished by observation, and his assurances confirmed by success. Sister, I can assure you, he has made his conquests; and 'tis a plague upon your sex, to be the soonest deceiv'd by those very men that you know have been false to others.

Ori. Then why will you tell me of his conquests? for I must confess, there is no title to a woman's favour so engaging as the repute of a handsome dissimulation; there is something of a pride to see a fellow lie at our feet, that has triumphed over so many; and then, I don't know, we fancy he must have something extraordinary about him to please us, and that we have something engaging about us to secure him; so we cann't be quiet till we put ourselves upon the lay of being both disappointed.

Dug. But then, sister, he's as fickle——

Ori. For God's sake, brother, tell me no more of his faults; for if you do, I shall run mad for him:—say no more, sir; let me but get him into the bands of matrimony, I'll spoil his wandering, I warrant him; I'll do his business that way; never fear.

Dug. Well, sister, I won't pretend to understand the engagements between you and your lover: I expect, when you have need of my counsel or assistance, you will let me know more of your affairs. Mirabel is a gentleman; and as far as my honour and interest can reach, you may command me to the furtherance of your happiness: in the mean time, sister, I have a great mind to make you a present of another humble servant, a fellow that I took up at Lyons, who has served me honestly ever since.

Ori. Then why will you part with him?

Dug. He has gain'd so insufferably on my good humour, that he's grown too familiar; but the fellow's cunning, and may be serviceable to you in your affair with Mirabel. Here he comes.

Enter PETIT.

Well, sir, have you been at Rousseau's?

Pet. Yes, sir: and who should I find there but Mr Mirabel and the captain, hatching as warmly over a tub of ice, as two hen pheasants over a brood——they would not let me bespeak any thing, for they had dined before I came.

Dug. Come, sir, you shall serve my sister; I shall still continue kind to you; and if your lady recommends your diligence, upon trial, I'll use my interest to advance you; you have sense enough to expect preferment.——Here, sirrah, here's ten guineas for thee; get thyself a drugget suit and a puff wig, and so—I dub thee gentleman-usher. Sister, I must put myself in repair: you may expect me in the evening—Wait on your lady home, Petit. [*Exit* DUGARD.

Pet. A chair, a chair, a chair!

Ori. No, no, I'll walk home; 'tis but next door. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Tavern, discovering* Young MIRABEL *and* DURETETE *rising from the table.*

Mir. Welcome to Paris once more, my dear captain: we have eat heartily, drank roundly, paid plentifully, and let it go for once. I liked every thing but our women; they looked so lean and tawdry, poor creatures! 'Tis a sure sign the army is not paid.——Give me the plump Venetian, brisk and sanguine, that smiles upon me like the glowing sun, and meets my lips like sparkling wine, her person shining as the glass, and spirit like the foaming liquor.

Dur. Ah! Mirabel! Italy I grant you; but for our women here in France, they are such thin, brawn-fallen jades, a man may as well make a bed-fellow of a cane chair.

Mir. France! a light, unseasoned country, nothing but feathers, foppery, and fashions: we are fine indeed, so are our coach-horses: men say we are courtiers,—men abuse us; that we are wise in politics, *non credo, seigneur;* that our women have wit;—parrots, mere parrots; assurance and a good memory sets them up.—There's nothing on this side the Alps worth my humble service t'ye—Ha, *Roma la santa!* Italy for my money: their customs, gardens, buildings, paint-

ings, music, politics, wine, and women! the paradise of the world——not pestered with a parcel of precise, old, gouty fellows, that would debar their children every pleasure that they themselves are past the sense of: commend me to the Italian familiarity;—here, son, there's fifty crowns, go pay your whore her week's allowance.

Dur. Ay, these are your fathers for you, that understand the necessities of young men; not like our musty dads, who, because they cannot fish themselves, would muddy the water, and spoil the sport of them that can. But now you talk of the plump, what d'ye think of a Dutch woman?

Mir. A Dutch woman's too compact; nay, every thing among them is so: a Dutch man is thick, a Dutch woman is squab, a Dutch horse is round, a Dutch dog is short, a Dutch ship is broad-bottom'd, and, in short, one would swear the whole produce of the country were cast in the same mould with their cheeses.

Dur. Ay, but Mirabel, you have forgot the English ladies.

Mir. The women of England were excellent, did they not take such unsufferable pains to ruin what Nature has made so incomparably well; they would be delicate creatures indeed, could they but thoroughly arrive at the French mien, or entirely let it alone; for they only spoil a very good air of their own, by an awkward imitation of ours: their parliaments and our tailors give laws to three kingdoms. But come, Duretete, let us mind the business in hand: mistresses we must have, and must take up with the manufacture of the place; and, upon a competent diligence, we shall find those in Paris shall match the Italians from top to toe.

Dur. Ay, Mirabel, you will do well enough, but what will become of your friend? you know I am so plaguy bashful, so naturally an ass upon these occasions, that——

Mir. Pshaw! you must be bolder, man: travel three years, and bring home such a baby as bashfulness!—A great lusty fellow! and a soldier! fie upon it.

Dur. Look'e, sir, I can visit, and I can ogle a little; as thus, or thus now. Then I can kiss abundantly, and make a shift to——but if they chance to give me a forbidding look, as some women, you know, have a devilish cast with their eyes—or if they cry—What d'ye mean? What d'ye take me for?—Fie, sir, remember who I am, sir——A person of quality to be used at this rate! 'Egad, I'm struck as flat as a frying-pan.

Mir. Words of course! never mind them: turn you about upon your heel, with a *jantée* air; hum out the end of an old song; cut a cross caper, and at her again.

Dur. [*Imitates him.*] No, hang it, 'twill never do—Oons! what did my father mean by sticking me up in an university, or to think that I should gain any thing by my head, in a nation whose genius lies all in their heels!——Well, if ever I come to have children of my own, they shall have the education of the country; they shall learn to dance before they can walk, and be taught to sing before they can speak.

Mir. Come, come, throw off that childish humour; put on assurance, there's no avoiding it; stand all hazards: thou'rt a stout, lusty fellow, and hast a good estate: look bluff, Hector; you have a good side-box face, a pretty impudent face; so that's pretty well.—This fellow went abroad like an ox, and is returned like an ass. [*Aside.*

Dur. Let me see now how I look. [*Pulls out a pocket glass, and looks on't.*] A side-box face, say you! 'Egad I don't like it, Mirabel. Fie, sir, don't abuse your friends; I could not wear such a face for the best countess in Christendom.

Mir. Why cann't you, blockhead, as well as I?

Dur. Why, thou hast impudence to set a good face upon any thing: I would change half my gold for half thy brass, with all my heart.—Who comes here?—Odso, Mirabel, your father.

Enter Old MIRABEL.

Old Mir. Where's Bob, dear Bob?

Mir. Your blessing, sir.

Old Mir. My blessing! Damn ye, ye young rogue, why did not you come to see your father first, sirrah? My dear boy, I am heartily glad to see thee, my dear child, faith—Captain Duretete, by the blood of the Mirabels, I'm yours. Well, my lads, ye look bravely, faith. Bob, hast got any money left?

Mir. Not a farthing, sir.

Old Mir. Why, then I won't give thee a souse.

Mir. I did but jest; here's ten pistoles.

Old Mir. Why, then here's ten more; I love to be charitable to those that don't want it. Well, and how d'ye like Italy, my boys?

Mir. Oh, the garden of the world, sir! Rome, Naples, Venice, Milan, and a thousand others—all fine.

Old Mir. Ay, say you so! And they say that Chiari is very fine too.

Dur. Indifferent, sir, very indifferent; a very scurvy air, the most unwholesome to a French constitution in the world.

Mir. Pshaw! nothing on't; these rascally gazetteers have misinformed you.

Old Mir. Misinformed me! Oons, sir, were not we beaten there?

Mir. Beaten, sir! the French beaten!

Old Mir. Why, how was it, pray, sweet sir?

Mir. Sir, the captain will tell you.

Dur. No, sir, your son will tell you.

Mir. The captain was in the action, sir.

Dur. Your son saw more than I, sir, for he was a looker-on.

Old Mir. Confound you both for a brace of cowards: here are no Germans to over-hear you why don't you tell me how it was?

Mir. Why, then, you must know, that we marched up a body of the finest, bravest, well-dressed fellows in the universe; our commanders at the head of us, all lace and feather, like so

many beaux at a ball—I don't believe there was a man of them but could dance a *charmer*, morbleu!

Old Mir. Dance! very well, pretty fellows, faith!

Mir. We capered up to their very trenches, and there saw, peeping over, a parcel of scarecrow, olive-coloured, gunpowder fellows, as ugly as the devil.

Dur. 'Egad, I shall never forget the looks of them while I have breath to fetch.

Mir. They were so civil, indeed, as to welcome us with their cannon; but for the rest, we found them such unmannerly, rude, unsociable dogs, that we grew tired of their company, and so we e'en danced back again.

Old Mir. And did you all come back?

Mir. No—two or three thousand of us staid behind.

Old Mir. Why, Bob, why?

Mir. Pshaw!—because they could not come that night.——But come, sir, we were talking of something else. Pray, how does your lovely charge, the fair Oriana?

Old Mir. Ripe, sir, just ripe; you'll find it better engaging with her than the Germans, let me tell you. And what would you say, my young Mars, if I had a Venus for thee too? Come, Bob, your apartment is ready, and pray let your friend be my guest too; you shall command the house between ye, and I'll be as merry as the best of you.

Mir. Bravely said, father.

Let misers bend their age with niggard cares,
And starve themselves to pamper hungry heirs;
Who, living, stint their sons what youth may crave,
And make them revel o'er a father's grave.
The stock on which I grow does still dispense
Its genial sap into the blooming branch;
The fruit, he knows, from his own root is grown,
And therefore sooths those passions once his own. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—Old MIRABEL'S *House.*

ORIANA *and* BISARRE.

Bis. And you love this young rake, d'ye?

Ori. Yes.

Bis. In spite of all his ill usage.

Ori. I cann't help it.

Bis. What's the matter with ye?

Ori. Pshaw!

Bis. Um!—before that any young, lying, swearing, flattering, rake-helly fellow should play such tricks with me, I would wear my teeth to the stumps with lime and chalk. Oh, the devil take all your Cassandras and Cleopatras for me. Pr'ythee mind your airs, modes, and fashions; your stays, gowns, and furbelows. Hark'e, my dear, have you got home your furbelowed smocks yet?

Ori. Pr'ythee be quiet, Bisarre; you know I can be as mad as you, when this Mirabel is out of my head.

Bis. Pshaw! would he were out, or in, or some way, to make you easy.—I warrant, now, you'll play the fool when he comes, and say you love him,—eh!

Ori. Most certainly; I cann't dissemble, Bisarre:—Besides, 'tis past that; we're contracted.

Bis. Contracted! alack-a-day, poor thing.—What, have you changed rings, or broken an old broad piece between you? Hark'e, child, ha'n't you broke something else between ye?

Ori. No, no, I can assure you.

Bis. Then what d'ye whine for? Whilst I kept that in my power, I would make a fool of any fellow in France. Well, I must confess, I do love a little coquetting with all my heart: my business should be to break gold with my lover one hour, and crack my promise the next; he should find me one day with a prayer-book in my hand, and with a play-book another; he should have my consent to buy the wedding-ring, and the next moment I would laugh in his face.

Ori. Oh, my dear, were there no greater tie upon my heart than there is upon my conscience, I would soon throw the contract out of doors; but the mischief on't is, I am so fond of being tied, that I'm forced to be just, and the strength of my passion keeps down the inclination of my sex.—But here's the old gentleman.

Enter Old MIRABEL.

Old Mir. Where's my wenches? Where's my two little girls? Eh! have a care, look to yourselves; faith, they're a-coming, the travellers are a-coming. Well, which of you two will be my daughter-in-law now?—Bisarre, Bisarre, what say you, mad-cap?—Mirabel is a pure wild fellow.

Bis. I like him the worse.

Old Mir. You lie, hussy, you like him the better, indeed you do. What say you, my t'other little filbert? eh!

Ori. I suppose the gentleman will choose for himself, sir.

Old Mir. Why, that's discreetly said; and so he shall.

Enter MIRABEL *and* DURETETE; *they salute the Ladies.*

Old Mir. Bob, hark'e, you shall marry one of these girls, sirrah.

Mir. Sir, I'll marry them both, if you please.

Bis. [*Aside.*] He'll find that one may serve his turn.

Old Mir. Both! why, you young dog, d'ye banter me?—Come, sir, take your choice. Duretete, you shall have your choice too, but Robin shall choose first. Come, sir, begin.

Mir. Well, I an't the first son that has made his father's dwelling a bawdy-house—let me see.

Old Mir. Well; which d'ye like?

Mir. Both.

Old Mir. But which will you marry?

Mir. Neither.

Old Mir. Neither! don't make me angry now, Bob; pray, don't make me angry. Look ye, sirrah, if I don't dance at your wedding to-morrow, I shall be very glad to cry at your grave.

Mir. That's a bull, father.

Old Mir. A bull! Why, how now, ungrateful? Sir, did I make thee a man, that thou shouldst make me a beast?

Mir. Your pardon, sir; I only meant your expression.

Old Mir. Hark ye, Bob; learn better manners to your father before strangers. I won't be angry this time; but, oons! if ever you do it again, you rascal—Remember what I say——

Mir. Pshaw! what does the old fellow mean by mewing me up here with a couple of green girls?——Come, Duretete, will you go?

Ori. I hope, Mr Mirabel, you ha'n't forgot——

Mir. No, no, madam, I ha'n't forgot; I have brought you a thousand little Italian curiosities. I'll assure you, madam, as far as a hundred pistoles would reach, I ha'n't forgot the least circumstance.

Ori. Sir, you misunderstand me.

Mir. Odso, the relics, madam, from Rome! I do remember now: you made a vow of chastity before my departure; a vow of chastity, or something like it; was it not, madam?

Ori. Oh, sir, I am answered at present. [*Exit.*

Mir. She was coming full mouth upon me with her contract. Would I might dispatch t'other!

Dur. Mirabel—that lady there, observe her; she's wondrous pretty, faith, and seems to have but few words: I like her mainly. Speak to her, man; pr'ythee, speak to her.

Mir. Madam, here's a gentleman, who declares—

Dur. Madam, don't believe him; I declare nothing—What the devil do you mean, man?

Mir. He says, madam, that you are as beautiful as an angel.

Dur. He tells a damn'd lie, madam; I say no such thing. Are you mad, Mirabel? Why, I shall drop down with shame.

Mir. And so, madam, not doubting but your ladyship may like him as well as he does you, I think it proper to leave you together.

[*Going,* DURET. *holds him.*

Dur. Hold, hold—Why, Mirabel, friend, sure you won't be so barbarous as to leave me alone. Pr'ythee, speak to her for yourself, as it were. Lord, Lord, that a Frenchman should want impudence!

Mir. You look mighty demure, madam.—She's deaf, captain.

Dur. I had much rather have her dumb.

Mir. The gravity of your air, madam, promises some extraordinary fruits from your study, which moves us with curiosity to enquire the subject of your ladyship's contemplation.—Not a word!

Dur. I hope in the Lord she's speechless; if she be, she's mine this moment. Mirabel, d'ye think a woman's silence can be natural?

Bis. But the forms that logicians introduce, and which proceed from simple enumeration, are dubitable, and proceed only upon admittance——

Mir. Hoity toity! what a plague have we here?—Plato in petticoats!

Dur. Ay, ay, let her go on, man; she talks in my own mother-tongue.

Bis. 'Tis exposed to invalidity from a contradictory instance, looks only upon common operations, and is infinite in its termination.

Mir. Rare pedantry!

Dur. Axioms, axioms! self-evident principles.

Bis. Then the ideas wherewith the mind is pre-occupate—Oh, gentlemen, I hope you'll pardon my cogitations! I was involved in a profound point of philosophy; but I shall discuss it somewhere else, being satisfied that the subject is not agreeable to your sparks that profess the vanity of the times. [*Exit.*

Mir. Go thy way, good wife Bias. Do you hear, Duretete? Dost hear this starch'd piece of austerity?

Dur. She's mine, man, she's mine! My own talent to a T. I'll match her in dialects, faith. I was seven years at the university, man; nursed up with *Barbara, Celarunt, Darii, Ferio, Baralipton.* Did you ever know, man, that 'twas metaphysics made me an ass? It was, faith. Had she talked a word of singing, dancing, plays, fashions, or the like, I had foundered at the first step; but as she is, Mirabel, wish me joy.

Mir. You don't mean marriage, I hope.

Dur. No, no, I am a man of more honour.

Mir. Bravely resolved, captain. Now, for thy credit, warm this frozen snow-ball; 'twill be a conquest above the Alps.

Dur. But will you promise to be always near me?

Mir. Upon all occasions; never fear.

Dur. Why, then, you shall see me in two moments make an induction from my love to her hand, from her hand to her mouth, from her mouth to her heart, and so conclude in bed, *categorematicè.*

Mir. Now the game begins, and my fool is entered. But here comes one to spoil my sport. Now shall I be teazed to death with this old-fashioned contract.—I should love her too, if I

might do it my own way; but she'll do nothing without witnesses, forsooth.—I wonder women can be so immodest.—

Enter ORIANA.

Well, madam, why d'ye follow me?

Ori. Well, sir, why do you shun me?

Mir. 'Tis my humour, madam; and I'm naturally swayed by inclination.

Ori. Have you forgot our contract, sir?

Mir. All I remember of that contract is, that it was made some three years ago; and that's enough, in conscience, to forget the rest on't.

Ori. 'Tis sufficient, sir, to recollect the passing of it; for in that circumstance, I presume, lies the force of the obligation.

Mir. Obligations, madam, that are forced upon the will are no tie upon the conscience. I was a slave to my passion when I passed the instrument; but the recovery of my freedom makes the contract void.

Ori. Sir, you cann't make that a compulsion which was your own choice; besides, sir, a subjection to your own desires has not the virtue of a forcible constraint; and you will find, sir, that to plead your passion for the killing of a man, will hardly exempt you from the justice of the punishment.

Mir. And so, madam, you make the sin of murder and the crime of a contract the very same, because that hanging and matrimony are so much alike.

Ori. Come, Mr Mirabel, these expressions I expected from the raillery of your humour, but I hope for very different sentiments from your honour and generosity.

Mir. Look ye, madam; as for my generosity, 'tis at your service, with all my heart: I'll keep you a coach and six horses, if you please; only permit me to keep my honour to myself; for I can assure you, madam, that the thing called honour is a circumstance absolutely unnecessary in a natural correspondence between male and female; and he's a madman that lays it out, considering its scarcity, upon any such trivial occasions. There's honour required of us by our friends, and honour due to our enemies, and they return it to us again; but I never heard of a man that left but an inch of his honour in a woman's keeping, that could ever get the least account on't. Consider, madam, you have no such thing among ye; and 'tis a main point of policy to keep no faith with reprobates—Thou art a pretty little reprobate; and so get thee about thy business.

Ori. Well, sir, even all this I will allow to the gaiety of your temper: your travels have improved your talent of talking, but they are not of force, I hope, to impair your morals.

Mir. Morals! Why, there it is again, now. I tell thee, child, there is not the least occasion for morals in any business between you and I. Don't you know, that, of all the commerce in the world, there is no such cozenage and deceit as in the traffic between man and woman? We study, all our lives long, how to put tricks upon one another. What is your business, now, from the time you throw away your artificial babies, but how to get natural ones with the most advantage? No fowler lays abroad more nets for his game, nor a hunter for his prey, than you do to catch poor innocent men. Why do you sit three or four hours at your toilet in a morning? Only with a villanous design to make some poor fellow a fool before night. What are your languishing looks, your studied airs and affectations, but so many baits and devices, to delude men out of their dear liberty and freedom? What d'ye sigh for? What d'ye weep for? What d'ye pray for? Why, for a husband; that is, you implore Providence to assist you in the just and pious design of making the wisest of his creatures a fool, and the head of the creation a slave.

Ori. Sir, I am proud of my power, and am resolved to use it.

Mir. Hold, hold, madam; not so fast. As you have variety of vanities to make coxcombs of us, so we have vows, oaths, and protestations, of all sorts and sizes, to make fools of you. As you are very strange and whimsical creatures, so we are allowed as unaccountable ways of managing you. And this, in short, my dear creature, is our present condition: I have sworn and lied briskly, to gain my ends of you; your ladyship has patched and painted violently, to gain your ends of me: but since we are both disappointed, let us make a drawn battle, and part clear on both sides.

Ori. With all my heart, sir; give me up my contract, and I'll never see your face again.

Mir. Indeed I won't, child.

Ori. What, sir, neither do one nor t'other?

Mir. No, you shall die a maid, unless you please to be otherwise upon my terms.

Ori. What do you intend by this, sir?

Mir. Why, to starve you into compliance. Look ye, you shall never marry any man; and you'd as good let me do you a kindness as a stranger.

Ori. Sir, you're a ———

Mir. What am I, mistress?

Ori. A villain, sir.

Mir. I'm glad on't. I never knew an honest fellow in my life, but was a villain upon these occasions. Ha'n't you drawn yourself now into a very pretty dilemma? Ha, ha, ha! the poor lady has made a vow of virginity, when she thought of making a vow for the contrary. Was ever poor woman so cheated into chastity?

Ori. Sir, my fortune is equal to yours, my friends as powerful, and both shall be put to the test, to do me justice.

Mir. What, you'll force me to marry you, will ye?

Ori. Sir, the law shall.

Mir. But the law cann't force me to do any thing else, can it?

Ori. Pshaw! I despise thee, monster.

Mir. Kiss, and be friends then. Don't cry, child, and you shall have your sugar-plum. Come,

madam, d'ye think I could be so unreasonable as to make you fast all your life long? No, I did but jest; you shall have your liberty. Here, take your contract, and give me mine.

Ori. No, I won't.

Mir. Eh! What, is the girl a fool?

Ori. No, sir, you shall find me cunning enough to do myself justice; and since I must not depend upon your love, I'll be revenged, and force you to marry me out of spite.

Mir. Then I'll beat thee out of spite, and make a most confounded husband.

Ori. Oh, sir, I shall match ye: a good husband makes a good wife at any time.

Mir. I'll rattle down your china about your ears.

Ori. And I'll rattle about the city, to run you in debt for more.

Mir. Your face-mending toilet shall fly out of the window.

Ori. And your face-mending periwig shall fly after it.

Mir. I'll tear the furbelow off your clothes; and when you swoon for vexation, you sha'n't have a penny to buy a bottle of hartshorn.

Ori. And you, sir, shall have hartshorn in abundance.

Mir. I'll keep as many mistresses as I have coach-horses.

Ori. And I'll keep as many gallants as you have grooms.

Mir. I'll lie with your woman before your face.

Ori. Have a care of your valet behind your back.

Mir. But, sweet madam, there is such a thing as a divorce.

Ori. But, sweet sir, there is such a thing as alimony; so, divorce on, and spare not. [*Exit.*

Mir. Ay, that separate maintenance is the devil—there's their refuge. O' my conscience, one would take cuckoldom for a meritorious action, because the women are so handsomely rewarded for it. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to a large Parlour in the same House.*

Enter DURETETE *and* PETIT.

Dur. And she is mighty peevish, you say?

Pet. Oh, sir, she has a tongue as long as my leg, and talks so crabbedly, you would think she always spoke Welch!

Dur. That's an odd language, methinks, for her philosophy.

Pet. But sometimes she will sit you half a day without speaking a word, and talk oracles all the while by the wrinkles of her forehead, and the motions of her eye-brows.

Dur. Nay, I shall match her in philosophical ogles, faith; that's my talent: I can talk best, you must know, when I say nothing.

Pet. But d'ye ever laugh, sir?

Dur. Laugh! Won't she endure laughing?

Pet. Why, she's a critic, sir; she hates a jest, for fear it should please her; and nothing keeps her in humour, but what gives her the spleen. And then for logic, and all that, you know——

Dur. Ay, ay, I'm prepared; I have been practising hard words and no sense this hour, to entertain her.

Pet. Then place yourself behind this screen, that you may have a view of her behaviour before you begin.

Dur. I long to engage her, lest I should forget my lesson.

Pet. Here she comes, sir: I must fly.

[*Exit* PET., *and* DUR. *stands peeping behind the curtain.*

Enter BISARRE *and Maid.*

Bis. [*With a book.*] Pshaw! hang books! they sour our temper, spoil our eyes, and ruin our complexions. [*Throws away the book.*

Dur. Eh! the devil such a word there is in all Aristotle.

Bis. Come, wench, let's be free; call in the fiddle; there's nobody near us.

Enter Fiddler.

Dur. Would to the Lord there was not!

Bis. Here, friend, a minuet—quicker time, ha!——Would we had a man or two!

Dur. [*Stealing away.*] You shall have the devil sooner, my dear dancing philosopher.

Bis. Uds my life! here's one.

[*Runs to* DURETETE, *and hauls him back.*

Dur. Is all my learned preparation come to this?

Bis. Come, sir, don't be ashamed; that's my good boy. You're very welcome; we wanted such a one—Come, strike up—I know you dance well, sir; you're fine shap'd for it——Come, come, sir; quick, quick; you miss the time else.

Dur. But, madam, I come to talk with you.

Bis. Ay, ay, talk as you dance, talk as you dance:—Come.

Dur. But we were talking of dialectics.

Bis. Hang dialectics! mind the time——quicker, sirrah. [*To the Fiddler.*]—Come,——And how d'ye find yourself now, sir?

Dur. In a fine breathing sweat, doctor.

Bis. All the better, patient, all the better. Come, sir, sing now, sing; I know you sing well; I see you have a singing face; a heavy, dull, sonata face.

Dur. Who! I sing?

Bis. Oh, you're modest, sir!—But come sit down; closer, closer.—Here, a bottle of wine ——Come, sir,—fa, la, ley; sing, sir.

Dur. But, madam, I came to talk with you.

Bis. Oh, sir, you shall drink first! Come, fill me a bumper—Here, sir, bless the king.

Dur. Would I were out of his dominions——By this light, she'll make me drunk too.

Bis. Oh, pardon me, sir; you shall do me right! fill it higher——Now, sir, can you drink a health under your leg?

Dur. Rare philosophy that, faith.

Bis. Come, off with it to the bottom——— Now, how d'ye like me, sir?

Dur. Oh, mighty well, madam!

Bis. You see how a woman's fancy varies; sometimes splenetic and heavy, then gay and frolicsome.—And how d'ye like the humour?

Dur. Good madam, let me sit down to answer you; for I am heartily tired.

Bis. Fie upon't! a young man, and tired! Up, for shame, and walk about: action becomes us—a little faster, sir—What d'ye think now of my Lady La Pale, and Lady Coquette, the duke's fair daughter? ha! Are they not brisk lasses? Then there is black Mrs Bellair, and brown Mrs Bellface.

Dur. They are all strangers to me, madam.

Bis. But let me tell you, sir, that brown is not always despicable. Oh, lard, sir, if young Mrs Bagatelle had kept herself single till this time o' day, what a beauty there had been! And then, you know the charming Mrs Monkeylove, the fair gem of St. Germain's.

Dur. Upon my soul, I don't.

Bis. And then you must have heard of the English beau, Spleenamore; how unlike a gentleman———

Dur. Hey!—not a syllable on't, as I hope to be saved, madam.

Bis. No! Why, then, play me a jig. Come, sir.

Dur. By this light, I cannot:—faith, madam, I have sprained my leg.

Bis. Then sit you down, sir;—and now tell me what's your business with me? What's your errand? Quick, quick; dispatch—Odso, may be you are some gentleman's servant that has brought me a letter, or haunch of venison.

Dur. 'Sdeath, madam! do I look like a carrier!

Bis. Oh, cry you mercy! I saw you just now; I mistook you, upon my word: you are one of the travelling gentlemen.—And pray, sir, how do all our impudent friends in Italy?

Dur. Madam, I came to wait upon you with a more serious intention than your entertainment has answered.

Bis. Sir, your intention of waiting on me was the greatest affront imaginable, however your expressions may turn it to a compliment. Your visit, sir, was intended as a prologue to a very scurvy play, of which Mr Mirabel and you so handsomely laid the plot.—Marry! No, no, I'm a man of more honour. Where's your honour? Where's your courage now? Ads my life, sir, I have a great mind to kick you. Go, go to your fellow-rake now; rail at my sex, and get drunk for vexation, and write a lampoon. But I must have you to know, sir, that my reputation is above the scandal of a libel; my virtue is sufficiently approved to those whose opinion is my interest; and for the rest, let them talk what they will; for, when I please, I'll be what I please, in spite of you, and all mankind; and so, my dear man of honour, if you be tired, con over this lesson, and sit there till I come to you.

[*Runs off.*

Dur. Tum ti dum. [*Sings.*] Ha, ha, ha! Ads my life, sir, I have a great mind to kick you—Oons and confusion! [*Starts up.*] Was ever man so abused?—Ay, Mirabel set me on.

Enter PETIT.

Pet. Well, sir, how d'ye find yourself?

Dur. You son of a nine-eyed whore, d'ye come to abuse me? I'll kick you with a vengeance, you dog!

[PETIT *runs off, and* DUR. *after him.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

Enter Old *and* Young MIRABEL.

Old Mir. Bob, come hither, Bob.

Mir. Your pleasure, sir?

Old Mir. Are not you a great rogue, sirrah?

Mir. That's a little out of my comprehension, sir; for I've heard say, that I resemble my father.

Old Mir. Your father is your very humble slave. I tell thee what, child, thou art a very pretty fellow, and I love thee heartily; and a very great villain, and I hate thee mortally.

Mir. Villain, sir! then I must be a very impudent one; for I cann't recollect any passage of my life that I'm ashamed of.

Old Mir. Come hither, my dear friend: dost see this picture? [*Shews him a little picture.*

Mir. Oriana's! Pshaw!

Old Mir. What, sir, won't you look upon it?——Bob, dear Bob, pr'ythee come hither now. Dost want any money, child?

Mir. No, sir.

Old Mir. Why, then, here's some for thee. Come here now. How canst thou be so hard-hearted an unnatural, unmannerly rascal, (don't mistake me, child; I an't angry,) as to abuse this tender, lovely, good-natur'd, dear rogue? Why, she sighs for thee, and cries for thee, pouts for thee, and sobs for thee; the poor little heart of it is like to burst. Come, my dear boy, be good-natured, like your own father, be now—and then see here, read this—the effigies of the

lovely Oriana, with ten thousand pounds to her portion; ten thousand pounds, you dog; ten thousand pounds, you rogue: how dare you refuse a lady with ten thousand pounds, you impudent rascal?

Mir. Will you hear me speak, sir?

Old Mir. Hear you speak, sir! If you had ten thousand tongues, you could not out-talk ten thousand pounds, sir.

Mir. Nay, sir, if you won't hear me, I'll be gone, sir; I'll take post for Italy this moment.

Old Mir. Ah, the fellow knows I won't part with him! [*Aside.*] Well, sir, what have you to say?

Mir. The universal reception, sir, that marriage has had in the world, is enough to fix it for a public good, and to draw every body into the common cause; but there are some constitutions like some instruments, so peculiarly singular, that they make tolerable music by themselves, but never do well in a concert.

Old Mir. Why, this is reason I must confess, but yet it is nonsense too; for though you should reason like an angel, if you argue yourself out of a good estate, you talk like a fool.

Mir. But, sir, if you bribe me into bondage with the riches of Crœsus, you leave me but a beggar, for want of my liberty.

Old Mir. Was ever such a perverse fool heard? —'Sdeath, sir, why did I give you education? Was it to dispute me out of my senses?—Of what colour, now, is the head of this cane? You'll say 'tis white, and, ten to one, make me believe it too.—I thought that young fellows studied to get money.

Mir. No, sir, I have studied to despise it: my reading was not to make me rich, but happy, sir.

Old Mir. There he has me again now! But, sir, did not I marry to oblige you?

Mir. To oblige me, sir! in what respect, pray?

Old Mir. Why, to bring you into the world, sir; wa'n't that an obligation?

Mir. And because I would have it still an obligation, I avoid marriage.

Old Mir. How is that, sir?

Mir. Because I would not curse the hour I was born.

Old Mir. Look ye, friend, you may persuade me out of my designs, but I'll command you out of yours; and though you may convince my reason that you are in the right, yet there is an old attendant of sixty-three, called positiveness, which you nor all the wits in Italy shall never be able to shake. So, sir, you're a wit, and I'm a father; you may talk, but I'll be obeyed.

Mir. This it is to have the son a finer gentleman than the father; they first give us breeding that they don't understand, then they turn us out of doors because we are wiser than themselves. But I'm a little aforehand with the old gentleman. [*Aside.*] Sir, you have been pleased to settle a thousand pounds sterling a-year upon me; in return of which, I have a very great honour for you and your family, and shall take care that your only and beloved son shall do nothing to make him hate his father, or to hang himself. So, dear sir, I'm your very humble servant.

Old Mir. Here, sirrah, rogue, Bob, villain! [*Runs off.*

Enter DUGARD.

Dug. Ah, sir! 'tis but what he deserves.

Old Mir. 'Tis false, sir, he don't deserve it:—what have you to say against my boy, sir?

Dug. I shall only repeat your own words.

Old Mir. What have you to do with my words? I have swallowed my words already, I have eaten them up; and how can you come at them, sir?

Dug. Very easily, sir; 'tis but mentioning your injured ward, and you will throw them up again immediately.

Old Mir. Sir, your sister was a foolish young flirt, to trust any such young, deceitful, rake-helly rogue, like him.

Dug. Cry you mercy, old gentleman! I thought we should have the words again.

Old Mir. And what then? 'Tis the way with young fellows to slight old gentlemen's words; you never mind them when you ought. I say that Bob's an honest fellow, and who dares deny it?

Enter BISARRE.

Bis. That dare I, sir; I say, that your son is a wild, foppish, whimsical, impertinent coxcomb; and were I abused as this gentleman's sister is, I would make it an Italian quarrel, and poison the whole family.

Dug. Come, sir, 'tis no time for trifling; my sister is abused, you are made sensible of the affront, and your honour is concerned to see her redressed.

Old Mir. Look ye, Mr Dugard, good words go farthest. I will do your sister justice, but it must be after my own rate; nobody must abuse my son but myself: for although Robin be a sad dog, yet he's nobody's puppy but my own.

Bis. Ay, that's my sweet-natured, kind old gentleman. [*Wheedling him.*] We will be good then, if you'll join with us in the plot.

Old Mir. Ah, you coaxing young baggage! What plot can you have to wheedle a fellow of sixty-three?

Bis. A plot that sixty-three is only good for—to bring other people together, sir; a Spanish plot, less dangerous than that of eighty-eight; and you must act the Spaniard, because your son will least suspect you; and if he should, your authority protects you from a quarrel, to which Oriana is unwilling to expose her brother.

Old Mir. And what part will you act in the business, madam?

Bis. Myself, sir! My friend is grown a perfect changeling: these foolish hearts of ours spoil our heads presently: the fellows no sooner turn knaves, but we turn fools. But I am still myself, and he may expect the most severe usage from me, because I neither love him nor hate him.

[*Exit*

Old Mir. Well said, Mrs Paradox: but, sir, who must open the matter to him?

Dug. Petit, sir, who is our engineer-general. And here he comes.

Enter PETIT.

Pet. Oh, sir, more discoveries! Are all friends about us?

Dug. Ay, ay, speak freely.

Pet. You must know, sir——Ods my life, I'm out of breath—You must know, sir—you must know—

Old Mir. What the devil must we know, sir?

Pet. That I have [*Pants and blows*] bribed, sir ——bribed——your son's secretary of state.

Old Mir. Secretary of state! who's that, for Heaven's sake?

Pet. His valet-de-chambre, sir.——You must know, sir, that the intrigue lay folded up with his master's clothes; and when he went to dust the embroidered suit, the secret flew out of the right pocket of his coat, in a whole swarm of your crambo songs, short-footed odes, and long-legged Pindarics.

Old Mir. Impossible!

Pet. Ah, sir, he has loved her all along! There was Oriana in every line: but he hates marriage. Now, sir, this plot will stir up his jealousy; and we shall know, by the strength of that, how to proceed farther. Come, sir, let's about it with speed.

'Tis expedition gives our king the sway;
For expedition to the French gave way;
Swift to attack, or swift—to run away.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter MIRABEL *and* BISARRE, *passing carelessly by one another.*

Bis. [*Aside.*] I wonder what she can see in this fellow, to like him?

Mir. [*Aside.*] I wonder what my friend can see in this girl, to admire her?

Bis. [*Aside.*] A wild, foppish, extravagant rake-hell.

Mir. [*Aside.*] A light, whimsical, impertinent mad-cap.

Bis. Whom do you mean, sir?

Mir. Whom do you mean, madam?

Bis. A fellow that has nothing left to re-establish him for a human creature, but a prudent resolution to hang himself.

Mir. There is a way, madam, to force me to that resolution.

Bis. I'll do't with all my heart.

Mir. Then you must marry me.

Bis. Look ye, sir, don't think your ill manners to me shall excuse your ill usage of my friend; nor, by fixing a quarrel here, to divert my zeal for the absent; for I'm resolved, nay, I come prepared to make you a panegyric, that shall mortify your pride like any modern dedication.

Mir. And I, madam, like a true modern patron, shall hardly give you thanks for your trouble.

Bis. Come, sir, to let you see what little foundation you have for your dear sufficiency, I'll take you to pieces.

Mir. And what piece will you choose?

Bis. Your heart, to be sure; 'cause I would get presently rid on't: your courage I would give to a Hector, your wit to a lewd play-maker, your honour to an attorney, your body to the physicians, and your soul to its master.

Mir. I had the oddest dream last night of the Duchess of Burgundy; methought the furbelows of her gown were pinned up so high behind, that I could not see her head for her tail.

Bis. The creature don't mind me! Do you think, sir, that your humourous impertinence can divert me? No, sir, I'm above any pleasure that you can give, but that of seeing you miserable. And mark me, sir: my friend, my injured friend, shall yet be doubly happy; and you shall be a husband as much as the rites of marriage and the breach of them can make you.

[*Here* MIRABEL *pulls out a Virgil, and reads to himself, while she speaks.*

Mir. [Reading.] *At Regina dolos (quis fallere possit amantem?)*
Dissimulare etiam sperásti, perfide tantum—
Very true.—
Posse nefas.
By your favour, friend Virgil, 'twas but a rascally trick of your hero to forsake poor pug so inhumanly.

Bis. I don't know what to say to him.—The devil—What's Virgil to do with us, sir?

Mir. Very much, madam; the most *à propos* in the world—for what should I chop upon, but the very place where the perjured rogue of a lover and the forsaken lady are battling it tooth and nail. Come, madam, spend your spirits no longer; we'll take an easier method: I'll be Æneas now, and you shall be Dido, and we'll rail by book. Now for you, Madam Dido.

Nec te noster amor, nec te data dextera quondam,
Nec moritura tenet creduli funera Dido.——
Ah, poor Dido! [*Looking at her.*

Bis. Rudeness, affronts, impatience! I could almost start out even to manhood, and want but a weapon as long as his to fight him upon the spot! What shall I say?

Mir. Now she rants.

Quæ quibus anteferam? jam, jam nec maxima Juno.

Bis. A man! No, the woman's birth was spirited away.

Mir. Right, right, madam, the very words.

Bis. And some pernicious elf left it in the cradle, with human shape to palliate growing mischief.

[*Both speak together, and raise their voices by degrees.*

Mir. *Perfide, sed duris genuit te cautibus horrens*
Caucasus, Hyrcanæque admorunt ubera Tigres.

Bis. Go, sir, fly to your midnight revels.——
Mir. Excellent!

I sequere Italiam ventis, pete regna per undas,
Spero equidem mediis, si quid pia numina possunt.
[Together again.

Bis. Converse with imps of darkness of your make; your nature starts at justice, and shivers at the touch of virtue.—Now the devil take his impudence; he vexes me so, I don't know whether to cry or laugh at him. [*Aside.*

Mir. Bravely performed, my dear Libyan: I'll write the tragedy of Dido, and you shall act the part: but you do nothing at all, unless you fret yourself into a fit; for here the poor lady is stifled with vapours, drops into the arms of her maids; and the cruel, barbarous, deceitful wanderer is, in the very next line, called pious Æneas.—There's authority for ye.

Sorry indeed Æneas stood,
To see her in a pout;
But Jove himself, who ne'er thought good
To stay a second bout,
Commands him off, with all his crew,
And leaves poor Dy, as I leave you.
[Runs off.

Bis. Go thy ways, for a dear, mad, deceitful, agreeable fellow. O' my conscience, I must excuse Oriana.

That lover soon his angry fair disarms,
Whose slighting pleases, and whose faults are charms. [*Exit.*

Enter PETIT; *runs about to every door, and knocks.*

Pet. Mr Mirabel! Sir, where are you? No where to be found?

Enter MIRABEL.

Mir. What's the matter, Petit?

Pet. Most critically met—Ah, sir, that one who has followed the game so long, and brought the poor hare just under his paws, should let a mongrel cur chop in, and run away with the puss.

Mir. If your worship can get out of your allegories, be pleased to tell me, in three words, what you mean.

Pet. Plain, plain, sir. Your mistress and mine is going to be married.

Mir. I believe you lie, sir.

Pet. Your humble servant, sir. [*Going.*

Mir. Come hither, Petit. Married, say you?

Pet. No, sir, 'tis no matter; I only thought to do you a service; but I shall take care how I confer my favours for the future.

Mir. Sir, I beg ten thousand pardons.
[*Bowing low.*

Pet. 'Tis enough, sir—I come to tell you, sir, that Oriana is this moment to be sacrificed; married, past redemption.

Mir. I understand her; she'll take a husband out of spite to me, and then, out of love to me, she will make him a cuckold: 'tis ordinary with women to marry one person for the sake of another, and to throw themselves into the arms of one they hate, to secure their pleasure with the man they love.—But who is the happy man?

Pet. A lord, sir.

Mir. I'm her ladyship's most humble servant. A train and a title, hey! Room for my lady's coach! A front row in the box for her ladyship! Lights, lights for her honour! Now must I be a constant attender at my lord's levee, to work my way to my lady's couchee:—a countess, I presume, sir.

Pet. A Spanish count, sir, that Mr Dugard knew abroad, is come to Paris, saw your mistress yesterday, marries her to-day, and whips her into Spain to-morrow.

Mir. Ay; is it so; and must I follow my cuckold over the Pyrenees? Had she married within the precincts of a billet-doux, I would be the man to lead her to church; but, as it happens, I'll forbid the banns. Where is this mighty Don.

Pet. Have a care, sir; he's a rough, cross-grained piece, and there's no tampering with him: would you apply to Mr Dugard, or the lady herself, something might be done, for it is in despite to you, that the business is carried on so hastily. Odso, sir, here he comes. I must be gone.
[*Exit.*

Enter Old MIRABEL, *dressed in a Spanish habit, leading* ORIANA.

Ori. Good my lord, a nobler choice had better suited your lordship's merit. My person, rank, and circumstances, expose me as the public theme of raillery, and subject me so to injurious usage, my lord, that I can lay no claim to any part of your regard, except your pity.

Old Mir. Breathes he vital air, that dare presume
With rude behaviour to profane such excellence?
Shew me the man————
And you shall see how sudden my revenge
Shall fall upon the head of such presumption.
Is this thing one? [*Strutting up to* MIRABEL.

Mir. Sir!

Ori. Good, my lord——

Old Mir. If he, or any he————

Ori. Pray, my lord, the gentleman's a stranger.

Old Mir. O, your pardon, sir——but if you had—remember, sir—the lady now is mine; her injuries are mine; therefore, sir,—you understand me.——Come, madam.

[*Leads* ORIANA *to the door; she goes off;* MIRABEL *runs to his father, and pulls him by the sleeve.*

Mir. *Ecoute, Monsieur le Count.*

Old Mir. Your business, sir?

Mir. Boh!

Old Mir. Boh! What language is that, sir?

Mir. Spanish, my lord.

Old Mir. What d'ye mean?

Mir. This, sir. [*Trips up his heels.*

Old Mir. A very concise quarrel, truly—— I'll bully him——*Trinidade Signieur*, give me fair play. [*Offering to rise.*

Mir. By all means, sir. [*Takes away his sword.*] Now, Signieur, where's that bombast look and fustian face your countship wore just now? [*Strikes him.*

Old Mir. The rogue quarrels well, very well: my own son, right!——But hold, sirrah; no more jesting: I'm your father, sir, your father!

Mir. My father! Then, by this light, I could find in my heart to pay thee. [*Aside.*] Is the fellow mad?—Why, sure, sir, I h'an't frightened you out of your senses?

Old Mir. But you have, sir.

Mir. Then I'll beat them into you again. [*Offers to strike him.*

Old Mir. Why, rogue—Bob, dear Bob, don't you know me, child?

Mir. Ha, ha, ha! the fellow's downright distracted.—Thou miracle of impudence! wouldst thou make me believe that such a grave gentleman as my father would go a masquerading thus? that a person of three-score and three would run about in a fool's coat, to disgrace himself and family? Why, you impudent villain, do you think I will suffer such an affront to pass upon my honoured father, my worthy father, my dear father? 'Sdeath, sir, mention my father but once again, and I'll send your soul to thy grandfather this minute! [*Offering to stab him.*

Old Mir. Well, well, I am not your father.

Mir. Why, then, sir, you are the saucy, hectoring Spaniard, and I'll use you accordingly.

Old Mir. The devil take the Spaniards, sir; we have all got nothing but blows since we began to take their part.

Enter DUGARD, ORIANA, *Maid, and* PETIT. DUGARD *runs to* Young MIRABEL, *the rest to* Old MIRABEL.

Dug. Fie, fie, Mirabel, murder your father!

Mir. My father! What, is the whole family mad?—Give me way, sir; I wont be held.

Old Mir. No, nor I neither; let me be gone, pray. [*Offering to go.*

Mir. My father!

Old Mir. Ay, you dog's face! I am your father, for I have bore as much for thee as your mother ever did.

Mir. O ho! then this was a trick, it seems; a design, a contrivance, a stratagem—Oh! how my bones ache!

Old Mir. Your bones, sirrah! why yours?

Mir. Why, sir, ha'n't I been beating my own flesh and blood all this while? O, madam, [*To* ORIANA] I wish your ladyship joy of your new dignity.—Here was a contrivance indeed!

Pet. The contrivance was well enough, sir, for they imposed upon us all.

Mir. Well, my dear dulcinea, did your Don Quixote battle for you bravely? My father will answer for the force of my love.

Ori. Pray, sir, don't insult the misfortunes of your own creating.

Dug. My prudence will be counted cowardice, if I stand tamely now.—[*Comes up between* MIRABEL *and his Sister.*]—Well, sir!

Mir. Well, sir! Do you take me for one of your tenants, sir, that you put on your landlord's face at me?

Dug. On what presumption, sir, dare you assume thus? [*Draws.*

Old Mir. What's that to you, sir? [*Draws.*

Pet. Help! help! the lady faints.

[ORIANA *falls into her maid's arms.*

Mir. Vapours! vapours! she'll come to herself.—If it be an angry fit, a dram of assa-fœtida—If jealousy, hartshorn in water—If the mother, burnt feathers—If grief, ratifia—If it be strait stays, or corns, there's nothing like a dram of plain brandy.

Ori. Hold off, give me air——O, my brother, would you preserve my life, endanger not your own; would you defend my reputation, leave it to itself; 'tis a dear vindication that's purchas'd by the sword; for though our champion proves victorious, yet our honour is wounded.

Old Mir. Ay, and your lover may be wounded, that's another thing. But I think you are pretty brisk again, my child.

Ori. Ay, sir, my indisposition was only a pretence, to divert the quarrel: the capricious taste of your sex excuses this artifice in ours.

For often, when our chief perfections fail,
Our chief defects with foolish men prevail.
[*Exit.*

Pet. Come, Mr Dugard, take courage; there is a way still left to fetch him again.

Old Mir. Sir, I'll have no plot that has any relation to Spain.

Dug. I scorn all artifice whatsoever; my sword shall do her justice.

Pet. Pretty justice, truly! Suppose you run him through the body; you run her through the heart at the same time.

Old Mir. And me through the head!—Rot your sword——Sir, we'll have plots. Come, Petit, let's hear.

Pet. What if she pretend to go into a nunnery, and so bring him about to declare himself?

Dug. That, I must confess, has a face.

Old Mir. A face! A face like an angel, sir. Ads my life, sir, 'tis the most beautiful plot in Christendom. We'll about it immediately. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Street.*

DURETETE *and* MIRABEL.

Dur. [*In a passion.*] And though I cann't dance,

nor sing, nor talk like you, yet I can fight, you know I can, sir.

Mir. I know thou canst, man.

Dur. 'Sdeath, sir, and I will: let me see the proudest man alive make a jest of me!

Mir. But I'll engage to make you amends.

Dur. Danced to death! Baited like a bear! Ridiculed! Threatened to be kicked! Confusion!—Sir, you set me on, and I will have satisfaction:—all mankind will point at me.

Mir. [*Aside.*] I must give this thunderbolt some passage, or 'twill break upon my own head——Look'e, Duretete, what do these gentlemen laugh at?

Enter two Gentlemen.

Dur. At me, to be sure——Sir, what made you laugh at me?

1*st Gen.* You're mistaken, sir; if we were merry, we had a private reason.

2*d Gen.* Sir, we don't know you.

Dur. Sir, I'll make you know me; mark and observe me; I won't be named; it sha'n't be mentioned, nor even whispered in your prayers at church.—'Sdeath, sir, d'ye smile?

1*st Gen.* Not I, upon my word.

Dur. Why, then, look grave as an owl in a barn, or a friar with his crown a-shaving.

Mir. [*Aside to the Gent.*] Don't be bullied out of your humour, gentlemen; the fellow's mad; laugh at him, and I'll stand by you.

1*st Gen.* 'Egad, and so we will.

Both. Ha, ha, ha!

Dur. Very pretty. [*Draws.*] She threatened to kick me. Ay, then, you dogs, I'll murder ye.

[*Fights, and beats them off;* MIRABEL *runs over to his side.*

Mir. Ha, ha, ha! bravely done, Duretete; there you had him, noble captain. Hey! they run, they run; *victoria! victoria!*—Ha, ha, ha! —how happy am I in an excellent friend!—Tell me of your virtuosos and men of sense—a parcel of sour-faced, splenetic rogues!—A man of my thin constitution should never want a fool in his company. I don't affect your fine things, that improve the understanding, but hearty laughing, to fatten my carcase; and, in my conscience, a man of sense is as melancholy without a coxcomb, as a lion without a jackall; he hunts for our diversion, starts game for our spleen, and perfectly feeds us with pleasure.

I hate the man who makes acquaintance nice,
And still discreetly plagues me with advice;
Who moves by caution, and mature delays,
And must give reasons for whate'er he says:
The man, indeed, whose converse is so full,
Makes me attentive, but it makes me dull.
Give me the careless rogue, who never thinks;
That plays the fool as freely as he drinks:
Not a buffoon, who is buffoon by trade,
But one that Nature, not his wants have made;
Who still is merry, but does ne'er design it,
And still is ridicul'd, but ne'er can find it;
Who when he's most in earnest, is the best;
And his most grave expression is a jest.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—Old MIRABEL'S *House.*

Enter Old MIRABEL *and* DUGARD.

Dug. The lady abbess is my relation, and privy to the plot: your son has been there, but had no admittance beyond the privilege of the grate, and there my sister refus'd to see him. He went off more nettled at his repulse than I thought his gaiety could admit.

Old Mir. Ay, ay, this nunnery will bring him about, I warrant ye.

Enter DURETETE.

Dur. Here, where are ye all?—O, Mr Mirabel! you have done fine things for your posterity—And you, Mr Dugard, may come to answer this—I come to demand my friend at your hands; restore him, sir, or ——— [*To* Old MIRABEL.

Old Mir. Restore him! what, d'ye think I have got him in my trunk, or my pocket?

Dur. Sir, he's mad, and you're the cause on't.

Old Mir. That may be; for I was as mad as he when I begot him.

Dug. Mad, sir! what d'ye mean?

Dur. What do you mean, sir, by shutting up your sister yonder to talk like a parrot through a cage; or a decoy duck, to draw others into the snare?—Your son, sir, because she has deserted him, he has forsaken the world; and, in three words, has———

Old Mir. Hanged himself!

Dur. The very same;—turned friar.

Old Mir. You lie, sir; 'tis ten times worse. Bob turned friar!—Why should the fellow shave his foolish crown, when the same razor may cut his throat?

Dur. If you have any command, or you any interest over him, lose not a minute: he has thrown himself into the next monastery, and has ordered me to pay off his servants, and discharge his equipage.

Old Mir. Let me alone to ferret him out: I'll sacrifice the abbot, if he receives him; I'll try whether the spiritual or the natural father has the most right to the child.—But, dear captain, what has he done with his estate?

Dur. Settled it upon the church, sir.

Old Mir. The church! Nay, then the devil won't get him out of their clutches——Ten thousand livres a-year upon the church! 'Tis downright sacrilege.—Come, gentlemen, all hands to work; for half that sum, one of these monasteries shall protect you a traitor from the law, a rebellious wife from her husband, and a disobedient son from his own father. [*Exit.*

Dug. But will ye persuade me that he's gone to a monastery?

Dur. Is your sister gone to the *filles repentis?* I tell you, sir, she's not fit for the society of repenting maids.

Dug. Why so, sir?

Dur. Because she's neither one nor t'other; she's too old to be a maid, and too young to repent. [*Exit*; DUGARD *after him.*

SCENE II.—*The Inside of a Monastery;* ORIANA *in a Nun's habit* : BISARRE.

Ori. I hope, Bisarre, there is no harm in jesting with this religious habit.

Bis. To me, the greatest jest in the habit is taking it in earnest: I don't understand this imprisoning people with the keys of paradise, nor the merit of that virtue which comes by constraint.—Besides, we may own to one another, that we are in the worst company when among ourselves; for our private thoughts run us into those desires which our pride resists from the attack of the world; and, you may remember, the first woman met the devil when she retired from her man.

Ori. But I'm reconciled, methinks, to the mortification of a nunnery; because, I fancy, the habit becomes me.

Bis. A well-contrived mortification, truly, that makes a woman look ten times handsomer than she did before!—Ay, my dear, were there any religion in becoming dress, our sex's devotion were rightly placed; for our toilets would do the work of the altar,—we should all be canonized.

Ori. But don't you think there is a great deal of merit in dedicating a beautiful face and person to the service of religion?

Bis. Not half so much as devoting them to a pretty fellow. If your feminality had no business in this world, why was it sent hither? Let us dedicate our beautiful minds to the service of heaven; and for our handsome persons, they become a box at the play as well as a pew in the church.

Ori. But the vicissitudes of fortune, the inconstancy of man, with other disappointments of life, require some place of religion, for a refuge from their persecution.

Bis. Ha, ha, ha!—and do you think there is any devotion in a fellow's going to church, when he takes it only for a sanctuary? Don't you know that religion consists in charity with all mankind; and that you should never think of being friends with Heaven till you have quarrelled with all the world. Come, come, mind your business. Mirabel loves you; 'tis now plain; and hold him to't: give fresh orders that he sha'n't see you: we get more by hiding our faces sometimes, than by exposing them; a very mask, you see, whets desire; but a pair of keen eyes, through an iron grate, fire double upon them, with view and disguise. But I must be gone upon my affairs:—I have brought my captain about again.

Ori. But why will you trouble yourself with that coxcomb?

Bis. Because he is a coxcomb: Had I not better have a lover like him, that I can make an ass of, than a lover like yours, to make a fool of me? [*Knocking below.*] A message from Mirabel, I'll lay my life. [*She runs to the door.*] Come hither, run, thou charming nun, come hither.

Ori. What's the news? [*Runs to her.*

Bis. Don't you see who's below?

Ori. I see nobody but a friar.

Bis. Ah! thou poor blind Cupid! O' my conscience, these hearts of ours spoil our heads instantly! the fellows no sooner turn knaves, than we turn fools.—A friar! Don't you see a villainous, genteel mien under that cloak of hypocrisy; the loose, careless air of a tall rake-helly fellow?

Ori. As I live, Mirabel turned friar! I hope, in heaven, he's not in earnest.

Bis. In earnest! ha, ha, ha!—are you in earnest?—Now's your time: this disguise has he certainly taken for a passport, to get in and try your resolution: stick to your habit, to be sure; treat him with disdain, rather than anger; for pride becomes us more than passion. Remember what I say, if you would yield to advantage, and hold out the attack: to draw him on, keep him off, to be sure.

The cunning gamesters never gain too fast,
But lose at first, to win the more at last. [*Exit.*

Ori. His coming puts me into some ambiguity; I don't know how; I don't fear him, but I mistrust myself. Would he were not come; yet I would not have him gone neither: I'm afraid to talk with him, but I love to see him though.
What a strange power has this fantastic fire,
That makes us dread even what we most desire!

Enter MIRABEL, *in a Friar's habit.*

Mir. Save you, sister—Your brother, young lady, having a regard for your soul's health, has sent me to prepare you for the sacred habit by confession.

Ori. That's false: the cloven foot already. [*Aside.*] My brother's care I own; and to you, sacred sir, I confess, that the great crying sin which I have long indulged, and now prepare to expiate, was love.——My morning thoughts, my evening prayers, my daily musings, nightly cares, was love! My present peace, my future bliss, the joy of earth, and hopes of heaven—I all contemned for love!

Mir. She's downright stark mad in earnest:—death and confusion, I have lost her! [*Aside.*]

You confess your fault, madam, in such moving terms, that I could almost be in love with the sin.

Ori. Take care, sir; crimes, like virtues, are their own rewards: my chief delight became my only grief: he in whose breast I thought my heart secure, turned robber, and despoiled the treasure that he kept.

Mir. Perhaps that treasure he esteems so much, that, like the miser, though afraid to use it, he reserves it safe.

Ori. No, holy father: who can be miser in another's wealth, that's prodigal of his own? His heart was open, shar'd to all he knew; and what, alas! must then become of mine? But the same eyes that drew this passion in, shall send it out in tears; to which now hear my vow.

Mir. [*Discovering himself.*] No, my fair angel, but let me repent; here on my knees behold the criminal that vows repentance his.—Ha! No concern upon her!

Ori. This turn is odd, and the time has been, that such a sudden change would have surprised me into some confusion.

Mir. Restore that happy time, for I am now returned to myself; for I want but pardon to deserve your favour, and here I'll fix till you relent, and give it.

Ori. Grovelling, sordid man! why would you act a thing to make you kneel; monarch in your pleasures to be slave to your faults? Are all the conquests of your wand'ring sway, your wit, your humour, fortune, all reduced to the base cringing of a bended knee? Servile and poor!—Pray heaven this change be real. [*Aside.*

Mir. I come not here to justify my fault, but my submission; for though there be a meanness in this humble posture, 'tis nobler still to bend when justice calls, than to resist conviction.

Ori. No more——thy oft-repeated, violated words reproach my weak belief: 'tis the severest calumny to hear thee speak: that humble posture, which once could raise, now mortifies my pride. How canst thou hope for pardon, from one that you affront by asking it?

Mir. [*Rises.*] In my own cause I'll plead no more; but give me leave to intercede for you against the hard injunctions of that habit, which for my fault you wear.

Ori. Surprising insolence! My greatest foe pretends to give me counsel!—But I am too warm upon so cool a subject. My resolutions, sir, are fixed; but as our hearts were united with the ceremony of our eyes, so I shall spare some tears to the separation. [*Weeps.*] That's all; farewell.

Mir. And must I lose her? No. [*Runs and catches her.*] Since all my prayers are vain, I'll use the nobler argument of man, and force you to the justice you refuse: you're mine by precontract; and where's the vow so sacred to disannul another? I'll urge my love, your oath, and plead my cause against all monastic shifts upon the earth.

Ori. Unhand me, ravisher! Would you prophane these holy walls with violence? Revenge for all my past disgrace now offers: thy life shall answer this, would I provoke the law:—urge me no farther, but be gone.

Mir. Inexorable woman! let me kneel again. [*Kneels.*

Enter Old MIRABEL.

Old Mir. Where, where's this counterfeit nun?

Ori. Madness! Confusion! I'm ruined!

Mir. What do I hear? [*Puts on his hood.*] What did you say, sir?

Old Mir. I say she's a counterfeit, and you may be another for aught I know, sir; I have lost my child by these tricks, sir.

Mir. What tricks, sir?

Old Mir. By a pretended trick, sir: 'a contrivance to bring my son to reason, and it has made him stark mad; I have lost him, and a thousand pounds a-year.

Mir. [*Discovering himself.*] My dear father, I'm your most humble servant.

Old Mir. My dear boy! [*Runs and kisses him.*] Welcome, *ex inferis*, my dear boy: 'tis all a trick; she's no more a nun than I am.

Mir. No!

Old Mir. The devil a bit.

Mir. Then kiss me again, my dear ad, for the most happy news—And now, most venerable, holy sister, [*Kneels.*

Your mercy and your pardon I implore,
For the offence of asking it before.

Look'e, my dear counterfeiting nun, take my advice; be a nun in good earnest; women make the best nuns always when they cann't do otherwise. Ah, my dear father! there is a merit in your son's behaviour that you little think: the free deportment of such fellows as I, makes more ladies religious than all the pulpits in France.

Ori. Oh, sir, how unhappily have you destroyed what was so near perfection!—He is the counterfeit that has deceived you.

Old Mir. Ha! Look'e sir, I recant; she is a nun.

Mir. Sir, your humble servant; then I'm a friar this moment.

Old Mir. Was ever an old fool so bantered by a brace o' young ones? Hang you both, you're both counterfeits, and my plot's spoiled, that's all.

Ori. Shame and confusion, love, anger, and disappointment, will work my brain to madness. [*Takes off her habit. Exit.*

Mir. Ay, ay, throw by the rags; they have served a turn for us both, and they shall e'en go off together. [*Takes off his habit.*

Thus the sick wretch, when tortur'd by his pain,
And finding all essays for life are vain;
When the physician can no more design,
Then calls the other doctor—the divine.
What vows to Heaven, would Heaven restore his health!
Vows all to Heaven,—his thoughts, his actions, wealth!

But if restor'd to vigour, as before,
His health refuses what his sickness swore.
The body is no sooner rais'd and well,
But the weak soul relapses into ill;
To all its former swing of life is led,
And leaves its vows and promises in bed.
[*Exit, throwing away the habit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* Old MIRABEL'S *House.* DURETETE, *with a Letter.*

Dur. [*Reads.*] 'My rudeness was only a proof of your humour, which I have found so agreeable, that I own myself penitent, and willing to make any reparation, upon your first appearance to——BISARRE.'—Mirabel swears she loves me, and this confirms it; then farewell gallantry, and welcome revenge: 'tis my turn now to be upon the sublime: I'll take her off, I warrant her.

Enter BISARRE.

Well, mistress, do you love me?

Bis. I hope, sir, you will pardon the modesty of—

Dur. Of what? Of a dancing devil?——Do you love me, I say?

Bis. Perhaps I——

Dur. What?

Bis. Perhaps I do not.

Dur. Ha! abused again! Death, woman, I'll—

Bis. Hold, hold, sir; I do, I do!

Dur. Confirm it then by your obedience; stand there, and ogle me now, as if your heart, blood, and soul were like to fly out at your eyes——First, the direct surprise. [*She looks full upon him.*] Right; next the *deux yeux par oblique.* [*She gives him the side glance.*] Right; now depart, and languish. [*She turns from him, and looks over her shoulder.*] Very well; now sigh. [*She sighs.*] Now drop your fan on purpose. [*She drops her fan.*] Now take it up again. Come now, confess your faults; are not you a proud—say after me.

Bis. Proud.

Dur. Impertinent.

Bis. Impertinent.

Dur. Ridiculous.

Bis. Ridiculous.

Dur. Flirt.

Bis. Puppy.

Dur. Zoons! Woman, don't provoke me; we are alone, and you don't know but the devil may tempt me to do you a mischief: ask my pardon immediately.

Bis. I do, sir; I only mistook the word.

Dur. Cry then. Have you got e'er a handkerchief?

Bis. Yes, sir.

Dur. Cry then, handsomely; cry like a queen in a tragedy. [*She pretending to cry, bursts out a-laughing, and enter two ladies laughing.*

Bis. Ha, ha, ha!

Ladies both. Ha, ha, ha!

Dur. Hell broke loose upon me, and all the furies fluttered about my ears! Betrayed again?

Bis. That you are, upon my word, my dear captain; ha, ha, ha!

Dur. The Lord deliver me!

1st Lady. What! Is this the mighty man, with the bull-face, that comes to frighten ladies? I long to see him angry:—come, begin.

Dur. Ah, madam, I am the best-natured fellow in the world.

2d Lady. A man! We're mistaken; a man has manner: the aukward creature is some tinker's trull in a periwig.

Bis. Come, ladies, let's examine him.

[*They lay hold on him.*

Dur. Examine! the devil you will!

Bis. I'll lay my life, some great dairy maid in man's clothes.

Dur. They will do't!—Look'e, dear Christian women, pray hear me.

Bis. Will you ever attempt a lady's honour again?

Dur. If you please to let me get away with my honour, I'll do any thing in the world.

Bis. Will you persuade your friend to marry mine?

Dur. Oh! yes, to be sure.

Bis. And will you do the same by me?

Dur. Burn me if I do, if the coast be clear.

[*Runs out.*

Bis. Ha, ha, ha! the visit, ladies, was critical for our diversion:—we'll go make an end of our tea. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Young MIRABEL *and* Old MIRABEL.

Mir. Your patience, sir: I tell you I won't marry; and though you send all the bishops in France to persuade me, I shall never believe their doctrine against their practice.

Old Mir. But will you disobey your father, sir?

Mir. Would my father have his youthful son lie lazing here, bound to a wife, chained like a monkey, to make sport to a woman, subject to her whims, humours, longing, vapours, and caprices; to have her one day pleased, to-morrow peevish, the next day mad, the fourth rebellious; and nothing but this succession of impertinence for ages together?—Be merciful, sir, to your own flesh and blood.

Old Mir. But, sir, did not I bear all this; why should not you?

Mir. Then you think that marriage, like treason, should attaint the whole body: pray consider, sir, is it reasonable, because you throw yourself down from one storey, that I must cast myself headlong from the garret window? You would compel me to that state which I have heard you curse yourself, when my mother and you have battled it for a whole week together.

Old Mir. Never but once, you rogue, and that was when she longed for six Flanders mares: ay, sir, then she was breeding of you, which shewed what an expensive dog I should have of you.—

Enter PETIT.

Well, Petit, how does she now?

Pet. Mad, sir; *con pompos!*——Ay, Mr. Mira-

bel, you'll believe that I speak truth now, when I confess that I have told you hitherto nothing but lies:—our jesting is come to a sad earnest; she's downright distracted.

Enter BISARRE.

Bis. Where is this mighty victor!——The great exploit is done; go triumph in the glory of your conquest—inhuman, barbarous man! Oh, sir, [*To the old gentleman*] your wretched ward has found a tender guardian of you; where her young innocence expected protection, here has she found her ruin.

Old Mir. Ay, the fault is mine; for I believe that rogue wont marry, for fear of begetting such another disobedient son as his father did. I have done all I can, madam, and now can do no more than run mad for company. [*Cries.*

Enter DUGARD, *with his sword drawn.*

Dug. Away! Revenge, revenge.

Old Mir. Patience, patience, sir. [Old MIRABEL *holds him.*] Bob, draw. [*Aside.*

Dug. Patience! The coward's virtue, and the brave man's failing, when thus provoked——Villain!

Mir. Your sister's frenzy shall excuse your madness; and to shew my concern for what she suffers, I'll bear the villain from her brother.—Put up your anger with your sword: I have a heart like yours, that swells at an affront received, but melts at an injury given; and if the lovely Oriana's grief be such a moving scene, 'twill find a part within this breast, perhaps as tender as a brother's.

Dug. To prove that soft compassion for her grief, endeavour to remove it.—There, there, behold an object that's infective; I cannot view her, but I am as mad as she.—

Enter ORIANA, *held by two Maids, who put her in a chair.*

A sister, that my dying parents left, with their last words and blessing, to my care.—Sister, dearest sister! [*Goes to her.*

Old Mir. Ay, poor child, poor child, d'ye know me?

Ori. You! you are Amadis de Gaul, sir!—Oh! Oh, my heart! were you never in love, fair lady? And do you never dream of flowers and gardens? —I dream of walking fires, and tall gigantic sights. Take heed; it comes now—What's that?—— Pray stand away: I have seen that face sure. ——How light my head is!

Mir. What piercing charms has beauty, even in madness! these sudden starts of undigested words shoot through my soul, with more persuasive force than all the studied art of laboured eloquence.——Come, madam, try to repose a little.

Ori. I cannot; for I must be up to go to church, and I must dress me, put on my new gown, and be so fine, to meet my love. Heigho! ——Will not you tell me where my heart lies buried?

Mir. My very soul is touched—Your hand, my fair.

Ori. How soft and gentle you feel!——I'll tell you your fortune, friend.

Mir. How she stares upon me!

Ori. You have a flattering face, but 'tis a fine one—I warrant you have five hundred mistresses. —Ay, to be sure, a mistress for every guinea in his pocket—Will you pray for me?—I shall die to-morrow—And will you ring my passing bell?

Mir. Oh, woman, woman, of artifice created! whose nature, even distracted, has a cunning: in vain let man his sense, his learning boast, when woman's madness over-rules his reason.——Do you know me, injured creature?

Ori. No; but you shall be my intimate acquaintance in the grave. [*Weeps.*

Mir. Oh, tears, I must believe you! Sure there is a kind of sympathy in madness; for even I, obdurate as I am, do feel my soul so tossed with storms of passion, that I could cry for help as well as she. [*Wipes his eyes.*

Ori. What, have you lost your lover? No, you mock me.——I'll go home and pray.

Mir. Stay, my fair innocent, and hear me own my love so loud, that I may call your senses to their place, restore them to their charming, happy functions, and reinstate myself into your favour.

Bis. Let her alone, sir; 'tis all too late: she trembles: hold her: her fits grow stronger by her talking. Don't trouble her: she don't know you, sir.

Old Mir. Not know him! What then? she loves to see him for all that.

Enter DURETETE.

Dur. Where are you all? What the devil! melancholy, and I here! Are ye sad, and such a ridiculous subject, such a very good jest among you as I am?

Mir. Away with this impertinence! this is no place for *bugatelle.* I have murdered my honour, destroyed a lady, and my desire of reparation is come at length too late.—See there.

Dur. What ails her?

Mir. Alas! she's mad!

Dur. Mad! dost wonder at that? By this light, they're all so; they're cozening mad, they're brawling mad, they're proud mad: I just now came from a whole world of mad women, that had almost———What, is she dead?

Mir. Dead! Heavens forbid!

Dur. Heavens further it! for till they be as cold as a key, there's no trusting them; you're never sure that a woman's in earnest, till she is nailed in her coffin. Shall I talk to her?—— Are you mad, mistress?

Bis. What's that to you, sir?

Dur. Oons! madam, are you there? [*Runs off.*

Mir. Away, thou wild buffoon! How poor and mean this humour now appears! His follies and my own I here disclaim; this lady's frenzy has restor'd my senses; and was she perfect now, as

once she was, (before you all I speak it,) she should be mine; and as she is, my tears and prayers shall wed her.

Dug. How happy had this declaration been some hours ago!

Bis. Sir, she beckons to you, and waves us to go off. Come, come, let's leave them.

[*Exeunt all but* MIR. *and* ORI.

Ori. Oh, sir!

Mir. Speak, my charming angel, if your dear senses have regained their order; speak, fair, and bless me with the news.

Ori. First, let me bless the cunning of my sex, that happy counterfeited frenzy, that has restored to my poor labouring breast the dearest, best beloved of men.

Mir. Tune, all ye spheres, your instruments of joy, and carry round your spacious orbs the happy sound of Oriana's health! her soul, whose harmony was next to yours, is now in tune again; the counterfeiting fair has played the fool.

She was so mad to counterfeit for me;
I was so mad to pawn my liberty:
But now we both are well, and both are free.

Ori. How, sir, free!

Mir. As air, my dear bedlamite. What, marry a lunatic! Look ye, my dear, you have counterfeited madness so very well this bout, that you'll be apt to play the fool all your life long. —Here, gentlemen—

Ori. Monster! you won't disgrace me?

Mir. O' my faith, but I will—here, come in, gentlemen—A miracle, a miracle! the woman's dispossessed! the devil's vanquished!

Enter Old MIRABEL *and* DUGARD.

Old Mir. Bless us! was she possessed?

Mir. With the worst of demons, sir,—a marriage devil, a horrid devil. Mr. Dugard, don't be surprised; I promised my endeavours to cure your sister; no mad-doctor in Christendom could have done it more effectually. Take her into your charge; and have a care she don't relapse; if she should, employ me not again; for I am no more infallible than others of the faculty; I do cure sometimes.

Ori. Your remedy, most barbarous man, will prove the greatest poison to my health; for though my former frenzy was but counterfeit, I shall now run into a real madness. [*Exit,* Old MIR. *after.*

Dug. This was a turn beyond my knowledge. —I'm so confused, I know not how to resent it. [*Exit.*

Mir. What a dangerous precipice have I escaped! Was not I just now upon the brink of destruction?

Enter DURETETE.

Oh, my friend, let me run into thy bosom! no lark, escaped from the devouring pounces of a hawk, quakes with more dismal apprehension.

Dur. The matter, man?

Mir. Marriage, hanging; I was just at the gallows'-foot, the running noose about my neck, and the cart wheeling from me. Oh, I sha'n't be myself this month again!

Dur. Did I not tell you so? They are all alike, —saints or devils: their counterfeiting cann't be reputed a deceit, for 'tis the nature of the sex, not their contrivance.

Mir. Ay, ay; there's no living here with security; this house is so full of stratagem and design, that I must abroad again.

Dur. With all my heart; I'll bear thee company, my lad. I'll meet you at the play, and we'll set out for Italy to-morrow morning.

Mir. A match: I'll go pay my compliment of leave to my father presently.

Dur. I'm afraid he'll stop you.

Mir. What, pretend a command over me, after his settlement of a thousand pounds a-year upon me! No, no, he has passed away his authority with the conveyance: the will of a living father is chiefly obeyed for the sake of the dying one.

What makes the world attend and crowd the great?
Hopes, interest, and dependence make their state:
Behold the anti-chamber fill'd with beaux;
A horse's levee, crown'd with courtly crows.
Though grumbling subjects make the crown their sport,
Hopes of a place will bring the sparks to court.
Dependence ev'n a father's sway secures;
For though the son rebels, the heir is yours:

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Street, before the Play-house.*

Enter MIRABEL *and* DURETETE, *as coming from the Play.*

Dur. How do you like this play?

Mir. I liked the company: the lady, the rich beauty in the front box had my attention. These impudent poets bring the ladies together to support them, and to kill every body else.

For deaths upon the stage the ladies cry,
But ne'er mind us that in the audience die:
The poet's hero should not move their pain;
But they should weep for those their eyes have slain.

Dur. Hoity toity! Did Phyllis inspire you with all this?

Mir. Ten times more: the play-house is the element of poetry, because the region of beauty; the ladies, methinks, have a more inspiring

triumphant air in the boxes than any where else; they sit commanding on their thrones, with all their subject slaves about them; their best clothes, best looks, shining jewels, sparkling eyes, the treasure of the world in a ring. Then there's such a hurry of pleasure to transport us; the bustle, noise, gallantry, equipage, garters, feathers, wigs, bows, smiles, ogles, love, music, and applause:—I could wish that my whole life long were the first night of a new play.

Dur. The fellow has quite forgot this journey.—Have you bespoke post-horses?

Mir. Grant me but three days, dear captain; one to discover the lady, one to unfold myself, and one to make me happy, and then I'm yours to the world's end.

Dur. Hast thou the impudence to promise thyself a lady of her figure and quality in so short a time?

Mir. Yes, sir; I have a confident address, no disagreeable person, and five hundred louis d'ors in my pocket.

Dur. Five hundred louis d'ors! You an't mad?

Mir. I tell you, she's worth five thousand; one of her black brilliant eyes is worth a diamond as big as her head. I compared her necklace with her looks, and the living jewels outsparkled the dead ones by a million.

Dur. But you have owned to me, that, abating Oriana's pretensions to marriage, you loved her passionately: then how can you wander at this rate?

Mir. I longed for partridge t'other day off the king's plate; but d'ye think, because I could not have it, I must eat nothing?

Dur. Pr'ythee, Mirabel, be quiet; you may remember what narrow escapes you have had abroad, by following strangers: you forget your leap out of the courtesan's window at Bologna, to save your fine ring there.

Mir. My ring's a trifle; there's nothing we possess comparable to what we desire. Be shy of a lady, bare-faced, in the front-box, with a thousand pounds in jewels about her neck!—For shame! no more——

Enter ORIANA *in Boy's Clothes, with a Letter.*

Ori. Is your name Mirabel, sir?

Mir. Yes, sir.

Ori. A letter from your uncle in Picardy.

[*Gives the letter.*

Mir. [*Reads.*] 'The bearer is the son of a protestant gentleman, who, flying for his religion, left me the charge of this youth.'—A pretty boy.—'He's fond of some handsome service, that may afford him an opportunity of improvement. Your care of him will oblige—Yours.'——Hast a mind to travel, child?

Ori. 'Tis my desire, sir; I should be pleased to serve a traveller in any capacity.

Mir. A hopeful inclination. You shall along with me into Italy, as my page.

Dur. I don't think it safe; the rogue's too handsome. [*Noise without.*] The play is done, and some of the ladies come this way

Enter LAMORCE, *with her train borne up by a Page.*

Mir. Duretete, the very dear, identical she!

Dur. And what then?

Mir. Why, 'tis she.

Dur. And what then, sir?

Mir. Then! Why—Look ye, sirrah, the first piece of service I put you upon, is to follow that lady's coach, and bring me word where she lives.

[*To* ORI.

Ori. I don't know the town, sir, and am afraid of losing myself.

Mir. Pshaw!

Lam. Page, what's become of all my people?

Page. I cann't tell, madam; I can see no sign of your ladyship's coach.

Lam. That fellow is got into his old pranks, and fallen drunk somewhere—none of my footmen there?

Page. Not one, madam.

Lam. These servants are the plague of our lives.—What shall I do?

Mir. By all my hopes, Fortune pimps for me!—Now, Duretete, for a piece of gallantry.

Dur. Why, you won't, sure?

Mir. Won't, brute!—Let not your servants' neglect, madam, put your ladyship to any inconvenience; for you cann't be disappointed of an equipage whilst mine waits below; and would you honour the master so far, he would be proud to pay his attendance.

Dur. Ay, to be sure. [*Aside.*

Lam. Sir, I won't presume to be troublesome; for my habitation is a great way off.

Dur. Very true, madam; and he is a little engaged: besides, madam, a hackney-coach will do as well, madam.

Mir. Rude beast, be quiet. [*To* DURETETE.]—The farther from home, madam, the more occasion you have for a guard—Pray, madam——

Lam. Lard, sir!——

[*He seems to press, she to decline it, in dumb show.*

Dur. Ah, the devil's in his impudence! Now he wheedles, she smiles; he flatters, she simpers; he swears, she believes; he's a rogue, and she's a w—— in a moment.

Mir. Without, there! my coach!—Duretete, wish me joy. [*Hands the lady out.*

Dur. Wish you a surgeon!—Here, you little Picard, go, follow your master, and he'll lead you——

Ori. Whither, sir?

Dur. To the academy, child; 'tis the fashion with men of quality to teach their pages their exercises—Go.

Ori. Won't you go with him too, sir? That woman may do him some harm; I don't like her.

Dur. Why, how now, Mr Page? Do you start up to give laws of a sudden? Do you pretend to rise at court, and disapprove the pleasure of your

betters? Look ye, sirrah, if ever you would rise by a great man, be sure to be with him in his little actions; and, as a step to your advancement, follow your master immediately, and make it your hope that he goes to a bawdy-house.

Ori. Heavens forbid! [*Exit.*

Dur. Now would I sooner take a cart in company of the hangman, than a coach with that woman. What a strange antipathy have I taken against these creatures! A woman to me is aversion upon aversion, a cheese, a cat, a breast of mutton, the squalling of children, the grinding of knives, and the snuff of a candle. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A handsome Apartment.*

Enter MIRABEL *and* LAMORCE.

Lam. To convince me, sir, that your service was something more than good breeding, please to lay out an hour of your company upon my desire, as you have already upon my necessity.

Mir. Your desire, madam, has only prevented my request. My hours! make them yours, madam; eleven, twelve, one, two, three, and all that belong to those happy minutes.

Lam. But I must trouble you, sir, to dismiss your retinue; because an equipage at my door, at this time of night, will not be consistent with my reputation.

Mir. By all means, madam, all but one little boy.—Here, page; order my coach and servants home, and do you stay:—'tis a foolish country boy, that knows nothing but innocence.

Lam. Innocence, sir! I should be sorry if you made any sinister constructions of my freedom.

Mir. Oh, madam, I must not pretend to remark upon any body's freedom, having so entirely forfeited my own.

Lam. Well, sir, 'twere convenient towards our easy correspondence, that we entered into a free confidence of each other, by a mutual declaration of what we are, and what we think of one another. Now, sir, what are you?

Mir. In three words, madam——I am a gentleman; I have five hundred pounds in my pocket, and a clean shirt on.

Lam. And your name is———

Mir. Mustapha——Now, madam, the inventory of your fortunes.

Lam. My name is Lamorce; my birth noble; I was married young, to a proud, rude, sullen, impetuous fellow; the husband spoiled the gentleman; crying ruined my face, till at last I took heart, leaped out of a window, got away to my friends, sued my tyrant, and recovered my fortune. I lived from fifteen to twenty to please a husband; from twenty to forty I'm resolved to please myself; and from thence upwards I'll humour the world.

Mir. The charming wild notes of a bird broke out of its cage!

Lam. I marked you at the play, and something I saw of a well-furnished, careless, agreeable *tour* about you. Methought your eyes made their mannerly demands with such an arch modesty, that I don't know how—but I'm elop'd—Ha, ha, ha!—I'm elop'd.

Mir. Ha, ha, ha!—I rejoice in your good fortune with all my heart.

Lam. Oh, now I think on't, Mr Mustapha, you have got the finest ring there; I could scarcely believe it right; pray, let me see it.

Mir. Hum!—Yes, madam, 'tis—'tis right—but, but, but, but it was given me by my mother; an old family ring, madam; an old-fashioned family ring.

Lam. Ay, sir—if you can entertain yourself with a song for a moment, I'll wait on you immediately. Come in there.—

Enter Singers.

Call what you please, sir. [*Exit.*

Mir. The new song——Pr'ythee, Phyllis.—[*Song.*]—Certainly the stars have been in a strange intriguing humour when I was born. Ay, this night should I have had a bride in my arms, and that I should like well enough; but what should I have to-morrow night?—The same. And what next night?—The same. And what next night?—The very same—Soup for breakfast, soup for dinner, soup for supper, and soup for breakfast again—But here's variety.

I love the fair who freely gives her heart,
That's mine by ties of nature, not of art;
Who boldly owns whate'er her thoughts indite,
And is too modest for a hypocrite.

LAMORCE *appears at the door; as he runs towards her, four Bravoes step in before her. He starts back.*

She comes, she comes!—Hum! hum!—Bitch!—Murdered, murdered, to be sure! The cursed strumpet, to make me send away my servants! Nobody near me——These cut-throats always make sure work. What shall I do? I have but one way.—Are these gentlemen your relations, madam?

Lam. Yes, sir.

Mir. Gentlemen, your most humble servant. Sir, your most faithful; yours, sir, with all my heart; your most obedient. Come, gentlemen, [*Salutes all round*] please to sit—no ceremony—next the lady, pray, sir.

Lam. Well, sir, and how d'ye like my friends? [*They all sit.*

Mir. Oh, madam, the most finished gentlemen! I was never more happy in good company in my life.—I suppose, sir, you have travelled?

1*st Bra.* Yes, sir.

Mir. Which way, sir, may I presume?

1*st Bra.* In a western barge, sir.

Mir. Ha, ha, ha! Very pretty! facetious, pretty gentleman!

Lam. Ha, ha, ha! Sir, you have got the prettiest ring upon your finger there——

Mir. Ah, madam, 'tis at your service with all my heart! [*Offering the ring.*

Lam. By no means, sir; a family ring! [*Takes it.*

Mir. No matter, madam.——Seven hundred pounds, by this light! [*Aside.*

2*d Bra.* Pray, sir, what's o'clock?

Mir. Hum!—Sir, I have left my watch at home.

2*d Bra.* I thought I saw the string of it just now.

Mir. Ods my life, sir, I beg your pardon; here it is! but it don't go. [*Putting it up.*

Lam. Oh, dear sir, an English watch! Tompion's, I presume.

Mir. D'ye like it, madam?—No ceremony—'tis at your service with all my heart and soul—Tompion's! Hang ye! [*Aside.*

1*st Bra.* But, sir, above all things, I admire the fashion and make of your sword-hilt.

Mir. I am mightily glad you like it, sir.

1*st Bra.* Will you part with it, sir?

Mir. Sir, I won't sell it.

1*st Bra.* Not sell it, sir!

Mir. No, gentlemen; but I'll bestow it with all my heart. [*Offering it.*

1*st Bra.* Oh, sir, we shall rob you!

Mir. That you do, I'll be sworn. [*Aside.*] I have another at home: pray, sir—Gentlemen, you're too modest: have I any thing else that you can fancy? Sir, will you do me a favour? [*To the* 1*st Bravo.*] I am extremely in love with that wig which you wear; will you do me the favour to change with me?

1*st Bra.* Look ye, sir, this is a family wig, and I would not part with it; but if you like it——

Mir. Sir, your most humble servant.

[*They change wigs.*

1*st Bra.* Madam, your most humble slave.

[*Goes up foppishly to the lady, and salutes her.*

2*d Bra.* The fellow's very liberal: shall we murder him? [*Aside.*

1*st Bra.* What, let him escape, to hang us all, and I to lose my wig! No, no; I want but a handsome pretence to quarrel with him; for you know we must act like gentlemen. [*Aside.*] Here, some wine. [*Wine here.*] Sir, your good health. [*Pulls* MIRABEL *by the nose.*

Mir. Oh, sir, your most humble servant! A pleasant frolic enough, to drink a man's health, and pull him by the nose. Ha, ha, ha! the pleasantest, pretty-humoured gentleman!

Lam. Help the gentleman to a glass.

[MIR. *drinks.*

1*st Bra.* How d'ye like the wine, sir?

Mir. Very good o' the kind, sir. But I tell ye what; I find we are all inclined to be frolicsome, and 'egad, for my own part, I was never more disposed to be merry. Let's make a night on't; ha!—This wine is pretty; but I have such Burgundy at home—Look ye, gentlemen, let me send for half a dozen flasks of my Burgundy; I defy France to match it——'Twill make us all life, all air: pray, gentlemen——

2*d Bra.* Eh——shall us have the Burgundy?

1*st Bra.* Yes, faith, we'll have all we can. Here, call up the gentleman's servant—What think you, Lamorce?

Lam. Yes, yes.——Your servant is a foolish country boy, sir; he understands nothing but innocence.

Mir. Ay, ay, madam.—Here, page!—

Enter ORIANA.

Take this key, and go to my butler; order him to send half a dozen flasks of the red Burgundy, marked a thousand; and be sure you make haste: I long to entertain my friends here, my very good friends.

Omnes. Ah, dear sir!

1*st Bra.* Here, child, take a glass of wine—Your master and I have changed wigs, honey, in a frolic.—Where had you this pretty boy, honest Mustapha?

Ori. Mustapha!

Mir. Out of Picardy. This is the first errand he has made for me, and if he does it right, I'll encourage him.

Ori. The red Burgundy, sir?

Mir. The red, marked a thousand; and be sure you make haste.

Ori. I shall, sir. [*Exit.*

1*st Bra.* Sir, you were pleased to like my wig, have you any fancy for my coat? Look ye, sir, it has served a great many honest gentlemen very faithfully.

Mir. Not so faithfully, for I'm afraid it has got a scurvy trick of leaving all its masters in necessity.—The insolence of these dogs is beyond their cruelty. [*Aside.*

Lam. You're melancholy, sir.

Mir. Only concerned, madam, that I should have no servant here but this little boy; he'll make some confounded blunder, I'll lay my life on't: I would not be disappointed of my wine for the universe.

Lam. He'll do well enough, sir. But supper's ready; will you please to eat a bit, sir?

Mir. Oh, madam, I never had a better stomach in my life!

Lam. Come, then; we have nothing but a plate of soup.

Mir. [*Aside.*] Ah, the marriage-soup I could dispense with now! [*Exit, handing the lady.*

2*d Bra.* That wig won't fall to your share.

1*st Bra.* No, no, we'll settle that after supper; in the mean time the gentleman shall wear it.

2*d Bra.* Shall we dispatch him?

3*d Bra.* To be sure. I think he knows me.

1*st Bra.* Ay, ay, dead men tell no tales: I wonder at the impudence of the English rogues, that will hazard the meeting a man at the bar, whom they have encountered upon the road. I ha'n't the confidence to look a man in the face after I have done him an injury; therefore we'll murder him. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to Old* MIRABEL'S *House.*

Enter DURETETE.

Dur. My friend has forsaken me, I have abandoned my mistress, my time lies heavy upon my hands, and my money burns in my pocket. But, now I think on't, my myrmidons are upon duty to-

night: I'll fairly stroll down to the guard, and nod away the night with my honest lieutenant, over a flask of wine, a rake-helly story, and a pipe of tobacco.

Going off, BISARRE *meets him.*

Bis. Who comes there? Stand!

Dur. Hey-day! now she's turn'd dragoon.

Bis. Look ye, sir, I'm told you intend to travel again. I design to wait on you as far as Italy.

Dur. Then I'll travel into Wales.

Bis. Wales! What country's that?

Dur. The land of mountains, child; where you're never out of the way, because there's no such thing as a high-road.

Bis. Rather always in a high-road, because you travel all upon hills. But, be as it will, I'll jog along with you.

Dur. But we intend to sail to the East Indies.

Bis. East or West, 'tis all one to me; I'm tight and light, and the fitter for sailing.

Dur. But suppose we take through Germany, and drink hard.

Bis. Suppose I take through Germany, and drink harder than you.

Dur. Suppose I go to a bawdy-house.

Bis. Suppose I shew you the way.

Dur. 'Sdeath, woman! Will you go to the guard with me, and smoke a pipe?

Bis. *Allons donc!*

Dur. The devil's in the woman! Suppose I hang myself.

Bis. There I'll leave you.

Dur. And a happy riddance; the gallows is welcome!

Bis. Hold, hold, sir; [*Catches him by the arm, going*] one word before we part.

Dur. Let me go, madam, or I shall think that you are a man, and perhaps examine you.

Bis. Stir, if you dare; I have still spirits to attend me; and can raise such a muster of fairies as shall punish you to death. Come, sir, stand there now, and ogle me. [*He frowns upon her.*] Now a languishing sigh. [*He groans.*] Now run and take my fan—faster. [*He runs, and takes it up.*] Now play with it handsomely.

Dur. Ay, ay. [*He tears it all in pieces.*

Bis. Hold, hold, dear humourous coxcomb! Captain, spare my fan, and I'll——Why, you rude, inhuman monster, don't you expect to pay for this?

Dur. Yes, madam; there's twelve-pence; for that is the price on't.

Bis. Sir, it cost a guinea.

Dur. Well, madam, you shall have the sticks again. [*Throws them to her, and exit.*

Bis. Ha, ha, ha! ridiculous, below my concern. I must follow him, however, to know if he can give me any news of Oriana. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*Changes to* LAMORCE'S *Lodgings.*

Enter MIRABEL.

Mir. Bloody hell-hounds! I overheard you. Was not I, two hours ago, the happy, gay, rejoicing Mira el? How did I plume my hopes in a fair coming prospect of a long scene of years? Life courted me with all the charms of vigour, youth, and fortune; and to be torn away from all my promised joys, is more than death—the manner too—by villains! Oh, my Oriana, this very moment might have bless'd me in thy arms! and my poor boy, the innocent boy!—Confusion!—But, hush, they come: I must dissemble still—No news of my wine, gentlemen?

Enter the four Bravoes.

1*st Bra.* No, sir; I believe your country booby has lost himself, and we can wait no longer for it—True, sir, you are a pleasant gentleman; but I suppose you understand our business.

Mir. Sir, I may go near to guess at your employments:—you, sir, are a lawyer, I presume; you a physician, you a scrivener, and you a stock-jobber——All cut-throats, 'egad. [*Aside.*

4*th Bra.* Sir, I am a broken officer; I was cashiered at the head of the army for a coward; so I took up the trade of murder, to retrieve the reputation of my courage.

3*d Bra.* I am a soldier too, and would serve my king, but I don't like the quarrel; and I have more honour than to fight in a bad cause.

2*d Bra.* I was bred a gentleman, and have no estate; but I must have my whore and my bottle, through the prejudice of education.

1*st Bra.* I am a ruffian too, by the prejudice of education: I was bred a butcher. In short, sir, if your wine had come, we might have trifled a little longer. Come, sir, which sword will you fall by? Mine, sir? [*Draws.*

2*d Bra.* Or mine? [*Draws.*

3*d Bra.* Or mine? [*Draws.*

4*th Bra.* Or mine? [*Draws.*

Mir. I scorn to beg my life; but to be butcher'd thus! [*Knocking.*] Oh, there's the wine!—— This moment for my life or death.—

Enter ORIANA.

Lost, for ever lost!—Where's the wine, child? [*Faintly.*

Ori. Coming up, sir. [*Stamps.*

Enter DURETETE *with his sword drawn, and six of the Grand Musqueteers with their pieces presented: the Ruffians drop their swords.* ORIANA *goes off.*

Mir. The wine, the wine, the wine! Youth, pleasure, fortune, days, and years are now my own again! Ah, my dear friends! did not I tell you this wine would make me merry?—Dear captain, these gentlemen are the best-natured, facetious, witty creatures that ever you knew.

Enter LAMORCE.

Lam. Is the wine come, sir?

Mir. Oh, yes, madam, the wine is come—See there! [*Pointing to the soldiers.*]—Your ladyship has got a very fine ring upon your finger.

Lam. Sir, 'tis at your service.

Mir. O ho! is it so? Thou dear seven hundred pounds, thou'rt welcome home again with all my heart.—Ads my life, madam, you have got the finest built watch there! Tompion's, I presume.

Lam. Sir, you may wear it.

Mir. Oh, madam, by no means, 'tis too much —rob you of all! [*Taking it from her.*] Good dear time, thou'rt a precious thing; I'm glad I have retrieved thee. [*Putting it up.*] What, my friends neglected all this while! Gentlemen, you'll pardon my complaisance to the lady. How now? —is it civil to be so out of humour at my entertainment, and I so pleased with yours?—Captain, you are surprised at all this! but we're in our frolics, you must know——Some wine here.—

Enter Servants with wine.

Come, captain, this worthy gentleman's health. ——[*Tweaks the first Bravo by the nose; he roars.*]——But now, where's my dear deliverer, my boy, my charming boy!

1*st Bra.* I hope some of our crew below stairs have dispatched him.

Mir. Villain, what sayest thou? Dispatched! I'll have you all tortured, racked, torn to pieces alive, if you have touched my boy.—Here, page! page! page! [*Runs out.*

Dur. Here, gentlemen, be sure you secure those fellows.

1*st Bra.* Yes, sir, we know you and your guard will be very civil to us.

Dur. Now for you, madam——he, he, he! I'm so pleased to think that I shall be revenged of one woman before I die—Well, Mistress Snap-Dragon, which of these honourable gentlemen is so happy to call you wife?

1*st Bra.* Sir, she should have been mine to-night, because Sampre here had her last night. Sir, she's very true to us all four.

Dur. Take them to justice.

[*The guards carry off the Bravoes.*

Enter Old MIRABEL, DUGARD, *and* BISARRE.

Old Mir. Robin, Robin; where's Bob? Where's my boy?—What, is this the lady? A pretty whore, faith? Hark'e, child, because my son was so civil as to oblige you with a coach, I'll treat you with a cart, indeed I will.

Dug. Ay, madam, and you shall have a swinging equipage,—three or four thousand footmen at your heels, at least.

Dur. No less becomes her quality.

Bis. Faugh! the monster!

Dur. Monster! ay, you're all a little monstrous, let me tell you.

Enter MIRABEL.

Old Mir. Ah, my dear Bob, art thou safe, man?

Mir. No, no, sir, I'm ruin'd; the saviour of my life is lost.

Old Mir. No, he came and brought us the news.

Mir. But where is he?——

Enter ORIANA.

Ha! [*Runs and embraces her.*] My dear preserver, what shall I do to recompence your trust?—Father, friends, gentlemen, behold the youth that has relieved me from the most ignominious death, from the scandalous poniards of these bloody ruffians, where to have fallen would have defamed my memory with vile reproach—My life, estate, my all, is due to such a favour. Command me, child: before you all, before my late so kind indulgent stars, I swear to grant whate'er you ask.

Ori. To the same stars, indulgent now to me, I will appeal as to the justice of my claim: I shall demand but what was mine before——the just performance of your contract to Oriana.

[*Discovering herself.*

Omnes. Oriana!

Ori. In this disguise I resolved to follow you abroad, counterfeited that letter that got me into your service, and so, by this strange turn of fate, I became the instrument of your preservation:—few common servants would have had such cunning: my love inspired me with the meaning of your message, because my concern for your safety made me suspect your company.

Dur. Mirabel, you're caught.

Mir. Caught! I scorn the thought of imposition; the tricks and artful cunning of the sex I have despised, and broke through all contrivance. Caught! No, 'tis my voluntary act; this was no human stratagem, but by my providential stars design'd, to shew the dangers wandering youth incurs by the pursuit of an unlawful love, to plunge me headlong in the snares of vice, and then to free me by the hands of virtue.—Here, on my knees, I humbly beg my fair preserver's pardon: my thanks are needless, for myself I owe—and now for ever do protest me yours.

Old Mir. Tall, all, di, dall. [*Sings.*] Kiss me, daughter—No, you shall kiss me first, [*To* LAMORCE] for you're the cause on't. Well, Bisarre, what say you to the captain?

Bis. I like the beast well enough, but don't understand his paces so well as to venture him in a strange road.

Old Mir. But marriage is so beaten a path that you cann't go wrong.

Bis. Ay, 'tis so beaten, that the way is spoiled.

Dur. There is but one thing should make me thy husband—I could marry thee to-day for the privilege of beating thee to-morrow.

Old Mir. Come, come, you may agree, for all this. Mr Dugard, are not you pleased with this?

Dug. So pleased, that if I thought it might secure your son's affection to my sister, I would double her fortune.

Mir. Fortune! has she not given me mine,—my life, estate, my all, and what is more, her virtuous self?—Virtue, in this so advantageous

life, has her own sparkling charms, more tempting far than glittering gold or glory. Behold the foil [*Pointing to* LAMORCE] that sets this brightness off! [*To* ORIANA.] Here view the pride [*To* ORIANA] and scandal of her sex. [*To* LAM.] There [*To* LAM.] the meteor whose deluding light leads mankind to destruction. Here [*To* ORIANA] the bright-shining star that guides to a security of happiness. A garden, and a single she, [*To* ORIANA] was our first father's bliss; the tempter, [*To* LAM.] and to wander, was his curse.

What liberty can be so tempting there, [*To* LAM.
As a soft, virtuous, am'rous bondage here?
[*To* ORI.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

FROM Fletcher's great original, to-day,
We took the hint of this our modern play:
Our author, from his lines, has strove to paint
A witty, wild, inconstant, free gallant;
With a gay soul, with sense, and will to rove,
With language, and with softness fram'd to move,
With little truth, but with a world of love.
Such forms on maids in morning slumbers wait,
When fancy first instructs their hearts to beat,
When first they wish, and sigh for what they
know not yet.
Frown not, ye fair, to think your lovers may
Reach your cold hearts by some unguarded way;
Let Villeroy's misfortune make you wise,—
There's danger still in darkness and surprise;
Though from his rampart he defy'd the foe,
Prince Eugene found an aqueduct below.
With easy freedom, and a gay address,
A pressing lover seldom wants success;
Whilst the respectful, like the Greek, sits down,
And wastes a ten years siege before one town.
For her own sake let no forsaken maid,
Our wanderer, for want of love, upbraid;
Since 'tis a secret, none should e'er confess,
That they have lost the happy power to please.
If you suspect the rogue inclin'd to break,
Break first, and swear you've turn'd him off a
week;
As princes, when they resty statesmen doubt,
Before they can surrender, turn them out.
Whate'er you think, grave uses may be made,
And much even for inconstancy be said.
Let the good man for marriage-rites design'd,
With studious care and diligence of mind,
Turn over every page of womankind;
Mark every sense, and how the readings vary,
And, when he knows the worst on't—let him
marry.

THE RECRUITING OFFICER.

BY

FARQUHAR.

PROLOGUE.

In ancient times, when Helen's fatal charms
Rous'd the contending universe to arms,
The Grecian council happily deputes
The sly Ulysses forth——to raise recruits:
The artful captain found, without delay,
Where great Achilles, a deserter, lay;
Him Fate had warn'd to shun the Trojan blows,
Him Greece requir'd——against the Trojan foes.
All their recruiting arts were needful here,
To raise this great, this tim'rous volunteer.
Ulysses well could talk——he stirs, he warms,
The warlike youth——He listens to the charms
Of plunders, fine lac'd coats, and glitt'ring arms:
Ulysses caught the young aspiring boy,
And listed him who wrought the fate of Troy.
Thus by recruiting was bold Hector slain;
Recruiting thus fair Helen did regain.
If for one Helen such prodigious things
Were acted, that they even listed kings;
If for one Helen's artful vicious charms
Half the transported world was found in arms,—
What for so many Helens may we dare,
Whose minds as well as faces are so fair?
If by one Helen's eyes old Greece could find
Its Homer fir'd to write, ev'n Homer blind,
Then Britons, sure, beyond compare may write,
That view so many Helens ev'ry night.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Mr BALANCE, *Mr* SCALE, *Mr* SCRUPLE, } *Justices.*
Mr WORTHY, *a Gentleman of Shropshire.*
Captain PLUME, *Captain* BRAZEN, } *Recruiting Officers.*
KITE, *Serjeant to Captain Plume.*
BULLOCK, *a country Clown.*
COSTAR PEARMAIN, THOMAS APPLETREE, } *Recruits.*

WOMEN.

MELINDA, *a Lady of fortune.*
SYLVIA, *Daughter to Mr Balance, in love with Captain Plume.*
LUCY, *Maid to Melinda.*
ROSE, *a country Wench.*
Constable, Recruits, Mob, Servants, and Attendants.

SCENE,—*Shrewsbury.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Market-Place—Drum beats the Grenadiers' March.*

Enter Serjeant KITE, *followed by* THOMAS APPLETREE, COSTAR PEARMAIN, *and the Mob.*

Kite. [*Making a speech.*] If any gentlemen soldiers or others have a mind to serve his majesty, and pull down the French king; if any 'prentices have severe masters, any children have undutiful parents; if any servants have too little wages, or any husband too much wife,—let them repair to the noble Serjeant Kite, at the sign of The Raven, in this good town of Shrewsbury, and they shall receive present relief and entertainment.——Gentlemen, I don't beat my drums here to ensnare or inveigle any man; for you must know, gentlemen, that I am a man of honour; besides, I don't beat up for common soldiers; no, I list only grenadiers; grenadiers, gentlemen.——Pray, gentlemen, observe this cap—this is the cap of honour; it dubs a man a gentleman in the drawing of a trigger; and he that has the good fortune to be born six foot high, was born to be a great man—Sir, will you give me leave to try this cap upon your head?

Cost. Is there no harm in't? Won't the cap list me?

Kite. No, no, no more than I can.—Come, let me see how it becomes you?

Cost. Are you sure there be no conjuration in it? no gunpowder plot upon me?

Kite. No, no, friend; don't fear, man.

Cost. My mind misgives me plaguily.—Let me see it—[*Going to put it on.*] It smells woundily of sweat and brimstone. Smell, Tummas.

Tho. Ay, wauns does it.

Cost. Pray, serjeant, what writing is this upon the face of it?

Kite. The crown, or the bed of honour.

Cost. Pray now, what may be that same bed of honour?

Kite. Oh! a mighty large bed! bigger by half than the great bed at Ware—ten thousand people may lie in it together, and never feel one another.

Cost. My wife and I would do well to lie in't, for we don't care for feeling one another——But do folk sleep sound in this same bed of honour?

Kite. Sound! ay, so sound that they never wake.

Cost. Wauns! I wish again that my wife lay there.

Kite. Say you so! then I find, brother——

Cost. Brother! hold there, friend; I am no kindred to you, that I know of yet.—Look ye, serjeant, no coaxing, no wheedling, d'ye see—if I have a mind to list, why so—if not, why 'tis not so—therefore take your cap and your brothership back again, for I am not disposed at this present writing.—No coaxing, no brothering me, faith!

Kite. I coax! I wheedle! I'm above it, sir: I have serv'd twenty campaigns——but, sir, you talk well, and I must own that you are a man, every inch of you; a pretty, young, sprightly fellow!—I love a fellow with a spirit; but I scorn to coax; 'tis base; though I must say, that never in my life have I seen a man better built. How firm and strong he treads! he steps like a castle!—but I scorn to wheedle any man—Come, honest lad! will you take share of a pot?

Cost. Nay, for that matter, I'll spend my penny with the best he that wears a head; that is, begging your pardon, sir, and in a fair way.

Kite. Give me your hand, then: and now, gentlemen, I have no more to say but this—here's a purse of gold, and there is a tub of humming ale at my quarters—'tis the king's money, and the king's drink—he's a generous king, and loves his subjects—I hope, gentlemen, you won't refuse the king's health.

All Mob. No, no, no.

Kite. Huzza then! huzza for the king and the honour of Shropshire.

All Mob. Huzza!

Kite. Beat drum.

[*Exeunt shouting, drum beating a grenadier's march.*

Enter PLUME, *in a riding habit.*

Plume. By the grenadiers' march that should be my drum, and by that shout it should beat with success.—Let me see—four o'clock—[*Looking on his watch.*] At ten yesterday morning I left London—an hundred and twenty miles in thirty hours is pretty smart riding, but nothing to the fatigue of recruiting.

Enter KITE.

Kite. Welcome to Shrewsbury, noble captain! from the banks of the Danube to the Severn side, noble captain, you're welcome!

Plume. A very elegant reception, indeed, Mr Kite. I find you are fairly enter'd into your recruiting strain—Pray what success?

Kite. I've been here a week, and I've recruited five.

Plume. Five! pray what are they?

Kite. I have listed the strong man of Kent, the king of the gipsies, a Scotch pedlar, a scoundrel attorney, and a Welch parson.

Plume. An attorney! wert thou mad? list a lawyer! discharge him, discharge him this minute.

Kite. Why, sir?

Plume. Because I will have nobody in my company that can write:—a fellow that can write can draw petitions—I say, this minute discharge him.

Kite. And what shall I do with the parson?

Plume. Can he write?

Kite. Hum! he plays rarely upon the fiddle.

Plume. Keep him, by all means—But how stands the country affected? were the people pleas'd with the news of my coming to town?

Kite. Sir, the mob are so pleas'd with your honour, and the justices and better sort of people are so delighted with me, that we shall soon do your business——But, sir, you have got a recruit here, that you little think of.

Plume. Who?

Kite. One that you beat up for the last time you were in the country. You remember your old friend Molly at the Castle?

Plume. She's not with child, I hope.

Kite. She was brought to-bed yesterday.

Plume. Kite, you must father the child.

Kite. And so her friends will oblige me to marry the mother.

Plume. If they should, we'll take her with us; she can wash, you know, and make a bed upon occasion.

Kite. Ay, or unmake it upon occasion. But your honour knows that I am married already.

Plume. To how many?

Kite. I cann't tell readily—I have set them down here upon the back of the muster-roll. [*Draws it out.*] Let me see—*Imprimis*, Mrs Shely Snikereyes; she sells potatoes upon Ormond key in Dublin—Peggy Guzzle, the brandy woman, at the Horse-Guards at Whitehall—Dolly Waggon, the carrier's daughter, at Hull—Madamoiselle Van Bottomflat, at the Buss—then Jenny Oakum, the ship carpenter's widow at Portsmouth; but I don't reckon upon her, for she was married at the same time to two lieutenants of marines and a man of war's boatswain.

Plume. A full company—you have named five—come, make them half-a-dozen—Kite, is the child a boy or a girl?

Kite. A chopping boy.

Plume. Then set the mother down in your list, and the boy in mine; enter him a grenadier, by the name of Francis Kite, absent upon furlough—I'll allow you a man's pay for his subsistence; and now, go comfort the wench in the straw.

Kite. I shall, sir.

Plume. But hold, have you made any use of your German doctor's habit since you arriv'd?

Kite. Yes, yes, sir, and my fame's all about the country, for the most faithful fortune-teller that ever told a lie—I was obliged to let my landlord into the secret, for the convenience of keeping it so; but he is an honest fellow, and will be faithful to any roguery that is trusted to him. This device, sir, will get you men and me money, which, I think, is all we want at present—But yonder comes your friend, Mr Worthy.—Has your honour any farther commands?

Plume. None at present. [*Exit* KITE.] 'Tis indeed the picture of Worthy, but the life's departed.

Enter WORTHY.

—What! arms across, Worthy! methinks you should hold them open when a friend's so near—The man has got the vapours in his ears, I believe. I must expel this melancholy spirit.

Spleen, thou worst of fiends below,
Fly, I conjure thee, by this magic blow.

[*Slaps* WORTHY *on the shoulder.*

Wor. Plume! my dear captain! welcome. Safe and sound return'd!

Plume. I escaped safe from Germany, and sound, I hope, from London: you see I have lost neither leg, arm, nor nose. Then, for my inside, 'tis neither troubled with sympathies nor antipathies; and I have an excellent stomach for roast beef.

Wor. Thou art a happy fellow: once I was so.

Plume. What ails thee, man? no inundations nor earthquakes in Wales I hope? Has your father rose from the dead, and reassumed his estate?

Wor. No.

Plume. Then you are married, surely?

Wor. No.

Plume. Then you are mad, or turning quaker?

Wor. Come, I must out with it——Your once gay, roving friend is dwindled into an obsequious, thoughtful, romantic, constant coxcomb.

Plume. And pray what is all this for?

Wor. For a woman.

Plume. Shake hands, brother. If thou go to that, behold me as obsequious, as thoughtful, and as constant a coxcomb as your worship.

Wor. For whom?

Plume. For a regiment!—but for a woman! 'Sdeath! I have been constant to fifteen at a time, but never melancholy for one: and can the love of one bring you into this condition? Pray, who is this wonderful Helen?

Wor. A Helen indeed! not to be won under ten years siege; as great a beauty, and as great a jilt.

Plume. A jilt! pho! is she as great a whore?

Wor. No, no.

Plume. 'Tis ten thousand pities! But who is she? do I know her?

Wor. Very well.

Plume. That's impossible—I know no woman that will hold out a ten years siege.

Wor. What think you of Melinda?

Plume. Melinda! why, she began to capitulate this time twelvemonth, and offered to surrender upon honourable terms; and I advised you to propose a settlement of five hundred pounds a-year to her, before I went last abroad.

Wor. I did, and she hearken'd to it, desiring only one week to consider——when, beyond her hopes, the town was reliev'd, and I forc'd to turn my siege into a blockade.

Plume. Explain, explain.

Wor. My lady Richly, her aunt, in Flintshire, dies, and leaves her, at this critical time, twenty thousand pounds.

Plume. Oh, the devil! what a delicate woman was there spoil'd! But, by the rules of war, now ——Worthy, blockade was foolish—After such a convoy of provisions was enter'd the place, you could have no thought of reducing it by famine;

you should have redoubled your attacks, taken the town by storm, or have died upon the breach.

Wor. I did make one general assault, but was so vigorously repuls'd, that, despairing of ever gaining her for a mistress, I have alter'd my conduct, giving my addresses the obsequious and distant turn, and court her now for a wife.

Plume. So, as you grew obsequious she grew haughty, and because you approached her like a goddess, she us'd you like a dog.

Wor. Exactly.

Plume. 'Tis the way of 'em all——Come, Worthy, your obsequious and distant airs will never bring you together; you must not think to surmount her pride by your humility. Wou'd you bring her to better thoughts of you, she must be reduc'd to a meaner opinion of herself. Let me see,—the very first thing that I would do should be to lie with her chamber-maid, and hire three or four wenches in the neighbourhood to report that I had got them with child——Suppose we lampoon'd all the pretty women in town, and left her out; or, what if we made a ball, and forgot to invite her, with one or two of the ugliest.

Wor. These would be mortifications, I must confess; but we live in such a precise, dull place that we can have no balls, no lampoons, no——

Plume. What! no bastards! and so many recruiting officers in town! I thought 'twas a maxim among them to leave as many recruits in the country as they carried out.

Wor. Nobody doubts your good will, noble captain, in serving your country with your best blood, witness our friend Molly at the Castle; there have been tears in town about that business, captain.

Plume. I hope Sylvia has not heard of it.

Wor. Oh, sir, have you thought of her? I began to fancy you had forgot poor Sylvia.

Plume. Your affairs had quite put mine out of my head. 'Tis true, Sylvia and I had once agreed to go to bed together, could we have adjusted preliminaries; but she would have the wedding before consummation, and I was for consummation before the wedding: we could not agree. She was a pert, obstinate fool, and would lose her maidenhead her own way; so she might keep it for Plume.

Wor. But do you intend to marry upon no other conditions?

Plume. Your pardon, sir; I'll marry upon no conditions at all—If I should, I am resolv'd never to bind myself down to a woman for my whole life, till I know whether I shall like her company for half an hour. Suppose I marry'd a woman that wanted a leg—such a thing might be, unless I examined the goods before-hand.——If people would but try one another's constitutions before they engag'd, it would prevent all these elopements, divorces, and the devil knows what.

Wor. Nay, for that matter, the town did not stick to say that——

Plume. I hate country towns for that reason—If your town has a dishonourable thought of Sylvia, it deserves to be burnt to the ground—I love Sylvia, I admire her frank generous disposition—there's something in that girl more than woman—her sex is but a foil to her—the ingratitude, dissimulation, envy, pride, avarice, and vanity of her sister females do but set off their contraries in her—In short, were I once a general, I wou'd marry her.

Wor. Faith, you have reason—for were you but a corporal, she would marry you—But my Melinda coquets it with every fellow she sees—I'll lay fifty pounds she makes love to you.

Plume. I'll lay you a hundred, that I return it, if she does.—Look'e, Worthy, I'll win her, and give her to you afterwards.

Wor. If you win her you shall wear her, faith; I would not value the conquest without the credit of the victory.

Enter KITE.

Kite. Captain, captain! a word in your ear.

Plume. You may speak out, here are none but friends.

Kite. You know, sir, that you sent me to comfort the good woman in the straw, Mrs Molly—my wife, Mr Worthy.

Wor. O ho! very well. I wish you joy, Mr Kite.

Kite. Your worship very well may—for I have got both a wife and a child in half an hour—But as I was saying—you sent me to comfort Mrs Molly—my wife, I mean—but what d'ye think, sir? she was better comforted before I came.

Plume. As how?

Kite. Why, sir, a footman in a blue livery had brought her ten guineas, to buy her baby-clothes.

Plume. Who, in the name of wonder, could send them?

Kite. Nay, sir, I must whisper that—Mrs Sylvia.

Plume. Sylvia! generous creature!

Wor. Sylvia! impossible!

Kite. Here are the guineas, sir—I took the gold, as part of my wife's portion. Nay, farther, sir, she sent word the child should be taken all imaginable care of, and that she intended to stand godmother. The same footman, as I was coming to you with this news, call'd after me, and told me, that his lady would speak with me—I went, and upon hearing that you were come to town, she gave me half-a-guinea for the news, and order'd me to tell you, that Justice Balance, her father, who is just come out of the country, would be glad to see you.

Plume. There's a girl for you, Worthy—Is there any thing of woman in this?—No, 'tis noble, generous, manly friendship. Shew me another woman that would lose an inch of her prerogative that way, without tears, fits, and reproaches. The common jealousy of her sex, which is nothing but their avarice of pleasure, she despises, and can part with the lover though she dies for the man—Come, Worthy—where's the best wine? for there I'll quarter.

Wor. Horton has a fresh pipe of choice Bar-

celona, which I would not let him pierce before, because I reserv'd the maidenhead of it for your welcome to town.

Plume. Let's away, then—Mr Kite, go to the lady, with my humble service, and tell her, I shall only refresh a little, and wait upon her.

Wor. Hold, Kite—have you seen the other recruiting captain?

Kite. No, sir; I'd have you to know I don't keep such company.

Plume. Another! who is he?

Wor. My rival, in the first place, and the most unaccountable fellow—but I'll tell you more as we go. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*An Apartment.* MELINDA *and* SYLVIA *meeting.*

Mel. Welcome to town, cousin Sylvia. [*Salute.*] I envy'd you your retreat in the country; for Shrewsbury, methinks, and all your heads of shires, are the most irregular places for living: here we have smoke, scandal, affectation, and pretension; in short, every thing to give the spleen—and nothing to divert it—then the air is intolerable.

Syl. Oh, madam! I have heard the town commended for its air.

Mel. But you don't consider, Sylvia, how long I have lived in it; for I can assure you, that, to a lady the least nice in her constitution—no air can be good above half a year. Change of air I take to be the most agreeable of any variety in life.

Syl. As you say, cousin Melinda, there are several sorts of airs.

Mel. Pshaw! I talk only of the air we breathe, or, more properly, of that we taste—Have not you, Sylvia, found a vast difference in the taste of airs?

Syl. Pray, cousin, are not vapours a sort of air? Taste air! you might as well tell me I may feed upon air! But pr'ythee, my dear Melinda! don't put on such an air to me. Your education and mine were just the same, and I remember the time when we never troubled our heads about air, but when the sharp air from the Welch mountains made our fingers ache in a cold morning at the boarding-school.

Mel. Our education, cousin, was the same, but our temperaments had nothing alike: you have the constitution of an horse.

Syl. So far as to be troubled neither with spleen, cholic, nor vapours. I need no salts for my stomach, no hartshorn for my head, nor wash for my complexion; I can gallop all the morning after the hunting horn, and all the evening after a fiddle. In short, I can do every thing with my father, but drink, and shoot flying; and I am sure I can do every thing my mother could, were I put to the trial.

Mel. You are in a fair way of being put to't, for I am told your captain is come to town.

Syl. Ay, Melinda, he is come, and I'll take care he sha'n't go without a companion.

Mel. You are certainly mad, cousin.

Syl.——And there's a pleasure in being mad
Which none but madmen know.

Mel. Thou poor, romantic Quixote!—hast thou the vanity to imagine that a young, sprightly officer, that rambles o'er half the globe in half a year, can confine his thoughts to the little daughter of a country justice, in an obscure part of the world?

Syl. Pshaw! what care I for his thoughts? I should not like a man with confined thoughts; it shews a narrowness of soul. Constancy is but a dull, sleepy quality at best; they will hardly admit it among the manly virtues, nor do I think it deserves a place with bravery, knowledge, policy, justice, and some other qualities that are proper for that noble sex. In short, Melinda, I think a petticoat a mighty simple thing, and I am heartily tired of my sex.

Mel. That is, you are tir'd of an appendix to our sex, that you cann't so handsomely get rid of in petticoats as if you were in breeches.—O' my conscience, Sylvia, hadst thou been a man, thou hadst been the greatest rake in Christendom.

Syl. I should have endeavoured to know the world, which a man can never do thoroughly without half a hundred friendships, and as many amours. But, now I think on't, how stands your affair with Mr. Worthy?

Mel. He's my aversion.

Syl. Vapours!

Mel. What do you say, madam?

Syl. I say that you should not use that honest fellow so inhumanly: he's a gentleman of parts and fortune, and, besides that, he's my Plume's friend; and, by all that's sacred, if you don't use him better, I shall expect satisfaction.

Mel. Satisfaction! you begin to fancy yourself in breeches in good earnest—But, to be plain with you, I like Worthy the worse for being so intimate with your captain, for I take him to be a loose, idle, unmannerly coxcomb.

Syl. Oh, madam! you never saw him, perhaps, since you were mistress of twenty thousand pounds: you only knew him when you were capitulating with Worthy for a settlement, which perhaps might encourage him to be a little loose and unmannerly with you.

Mel. What do you mean, madam?

Syl. My meaning needs no interpretation, madam.

Mel. Better it had, madam, for methinks you are too plain.

Syl. If you mean the plainness of my person, I think your ladyship's as plain as me to the full.

Mel. Were I sure of that, I would be glad to take up with a rake-helly officer, as you do.

Syl. Again! look'e, madam, you are in your own house.

Mel. And if you had kept in yours, I should have excused you.

Syl. Don't be troubled, madam; I sha'n't desire to have my visit returned.

Mel. The sooner, therefore, you make an end of this the better.

Syl. I am easily persuaded to follow my inclinations; and so, madam, your humble servant. [*Exit.*

Mel. Saucy thing!

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. What's the matter, madam?

Mel. Did not you see the proud nothing, how she swell'd upon the arrival of her fellow?

Lucy. Her fellow has not been long enough arriv'd to occasion any great swelling, madam: I don't believe she has seen him yet.

Mel. Nor sha'n't, if I can help it—Let me see—I have it—Bring me pen and ink—Hold, I'll go write in my closet.

Lucy. An answer to this letter, I hope, madam! [*Presents a letter.*

Mel. Who sent it?

Lucy. Your captain, madam.

Mel. He's a fool, and I'm tir'd of him: send it back unopen'd.

Lucy. The messenger's gone, madam.

Mel. Then how should I send an answer? Call him back immediately, while I go write. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment.*

Enter Justice BALANCE *and* PLUME.

Bal. Look'e, captain, give us but blood for our money, and you sha'n't want men. I remember that for some years of the last war we had no blood, no wounds, but in the officers' mouths; nothing for our millions but news-papers not worth a reading—Our army did nothing but play at prison-bars, and hide and seek with the enemy; but now ye have brought us colours, and standards, and prisoners—Ads my life, captain, get us but another marshal of France, and I'll go myself for a soldier.

Plume. Pray, Mr Balance, how does your fair daughter?

Bal. Ah, captain! what is my daughter to a marshal of France! we're upon a nobler subject: I want to have a particular description of the battle of Hockstet.

Plume. The battle, sir, was a very pretty battle, as any one should desire to see; but we were all so intent upon victory that we never minded the battle: all that I know of the matter is, our general commanded us to beat the French, and we did so; and, if he pleases but to say the word, we'll do it again. But pray, sir, how does Mrs Sylvia?

Bal. Still upon Sylvia! for shame, captain! you are engaged already, wedded to the war: Victory is your mistress, and 'tis below a soldier to think of any other.

Plume. As a mistress, I confess, but as a friend, Mr Balance———

Bal. Come, come, captain, never mince the matter; would not you debauch my daughter if you could?

Plume. How, sir! I hope she is not to be debauch'd.

Bal. Faith but she is, sir, and any woman in England, of her age and complexion, by your youth and vigour. Look'e, captain, once I was young, and once an officer, as you are, and I can guess at your thoughts now by what mine were then; and I remember very well that I would have given one of my legs to have deluded the daughter of an old country gentleman like me, as I was then like you.

Plume. But, sir, was that country gentleman your friend and benefactor?

Bal. Not much of that.

Plume. There the comparison breaks: the favours, sir, that———

Bal. Pho, pho! I hate set speeches: If I have done you any service, captain, it was to please myself. I love thee, and if I could part with my girl, you should have her as soon as any young fellow I know; but I hope you have more honour than to quit the service, and she more prudence than to follow the camp: but she's at her own disposal: she has fifteen hundred pounds in her pocket, and so—Sylvia, Sylvia! [*Calls.*

Enter SYLVIA.

Syl. There are some letters, sir, come by the post from London; I left them upon the table in your closet.

Bal. And here is a gentleman from Germany. [*Presents* PLUME *to her.*] Captain, you'll excuse me; I'll go read my letters, and wait on you. [*Exit.*

Syl. Sir, you are welcome to England.

Plume. You are indebted to me a welcome, madam, since the hopes of receiving it from this fair hand was the principal cause of my seeing England.

Syl. I have often heard that soldiers were sincere; may I venture to believe public report?

Plume. You may, when 'tis back'd by private assurance; for I swear, madam, by the honour of my profession, that whatever dangers I went upon, it was with the hope of making myself more worthy of your esteem; and if ever I had thoughts of preserving my life, 'twas for the pleasure of dying at your feet.

Syl. Well, well, you shall die at my feet, or where you will; but you know, sir, there is a certain will and testament to be made beforehand.

Plume. My will, madam, is made already, and there it is; and if you please to open that parch-

ment, which was drawn the evening before the battle of Hockstet, you will find whom I left my heir.

Syl. Mrs Sylvia Balance.—[*Opens the will, and reads.*] Well, captain, this is a handsome and a substantial compliment; but I can assure you I am much better pleased with the bare knowledge of your intention, than I should have been in the possession of your legacy: but, methinks, sir, you should have left something to your little boy at The Castle.

Plume. That's home. [*Aside.*] My little boy! Lack-a-day, madam! that alone may convince you 'twas none of mine: why, the girl, madam, is my serjeant's wife, and so the poor creature gave out that I was the father, in hopes that my friends might support her in case of necessity—That was all, madam—My boy! no, no, no!

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, my master has receiv'd some ill news from London, and desires to speak with you immediately; and he begs the captain's pardon that he cann't wait on him, as he promised.

Plume. Ill news! Heavens avert it! Nothing could touch me nearer than to see that generous, worthy gentleman afflicted. I'll leave you to comfort him, and be assured, that if my life and fortune can be any way serviceable to the father of my Sylvia, he shall freely command both.

Syl. The necessity must be very pressing that would engage me to endanger either.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—*Another Apartment.*

Enter BALANCE *and* SYLVIA.

Syl. Whilst there is life there is hope, sir: perhaps my brother may recover.

Bal. We have but little reason to expect it: the doctor Kilman acquaints me here, that before this comes to my hands he fears I shall have no son.—Poor Owen!—but the decree is just: I was pleased with the death of my father, because he left me an estate, and now I am punish'd with the loss of an heir to inherit mine. I must now look upon you as the only hopes of my family; and I expect that the augmentation of your fortune will give you fresh thoughts and new prospects.

Syl. My desire in being punctual in my obedience requires that you would be plain in your commands, sir.

Bal. The death of your brother makes you sole heiress to my estate, which, you know, is about twelve hundred pounds a-year: this fortune gives you a fair claim to quality and a title: you must set a just value upon yourself, and, in plain terms, think no more of Captain Plume.

Syl. You have often commended the gentleman, sir.

Bal. And I do so still; he's a very pretty fellow; but though I lik'd him well enough for a bare son-in-law, I don't approve of him for an heir to my estate and family:—fifteen hundred pounds, indeed, I might trust in his hands, and it might do the young fellow a kindness; but—ods my life! twelve hundred pounds a-year would ruin him, quite turn his brain—A captain of foot worth twelve hundred pounds a-year! 'tis a prodigy in nature! Besides this, I have five or six thousand pounds in woods upon my estate: oh! that would make him stark mad; for you must know that all captains have a mighty aversion to timber; they cann't endure to see trees standing. Then I should have some rogue of a builder, by the help of his damn'd magic art, transform my noble oaks and elms into cornices, portals, sashes, birds, beasts, and devils, to adorn some maggoty new-fashion'd bauble upon the Thames; and then you should have a dog of a gard'ner bring a *habeas corpus* upon my *terra firma*, remove it to Chelsea or Twickenham, and clap it into grass-plots and gravel-walks.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, here's one with a letter below for your worship, but he will deliver it into no hands but your own.

Bal. Come, shew me the messenger.

[*Exit with Servant.*

Syl. Make the dispute between love and duty, and I am Prince Prettyman exactly—If my brother dies, ah, poor brother! if he lives, ah, poor sister! It is bad both ways. I'll try it again—Follow my own inclinations, and break my father's heart, or obey his commands, and break my own! Worse and worse. Suppose I take it thus:—A moderate fortune, a pretty fellow, and a pad; or, a fine estate, a coach-and-six, and an ass—That will never do neither.

Enter BALANCE *and a Servant.*

Bal. Put four horses to the coach. [*To a Servant, who goes out.*] Ho, Sylvia!

Syl. Sir.

Bal. How old were you when your mother died?

Syl. So young that I don't remember I ever had one; and you have been so careful, so indulgent to me since, that indeed I never wanted one.

Bal. Have I ever denied you any thing you ask'd of me?

Syl. Never, that I remember.

Bal. Then, Sylvia, I must beg that, once in your life, you would grant me a favour.

Syl. Why should you question it, sir?

Bal. I don't, but I would rather counsel than command. I don't propose this with the authority of a parent, but as the advice of your friend,—that you would take the coach this moment, and go into the country.

Syl. Does this advice, sir, proceed from the contents of the letter you receiv'd just now?

Bal. No matter; I will be with you in three or four days, and then give you my reasons—but before you go, I expect you will make me one solemn promise.

Syl. Propose the thing, sir.

Bal. That you will never dispose of yourself to any man without my consent.

Syl. I promise.

Bal. Very well; and to be even with you, I promise I never will dispose of you without your own consent: and so, Sylvia, the coach is ready. Farewell. [*Leads her to the door, and returns.*] Now she's gone, I'll examine the contents of this letter a little nearer. [*Reads.*

'SIR,

'My intimacy with Mr Worthy has drawn a secret from him, that he had from his friend Captain Plume, and my friendship and relation to your family oblige me to give you timely notice of it. The captain has dishonourable designs upon my cousin Sylvia. Evils of this nature are more easily prevented than amended: and that you would immediately send my cousin into the country is the advice of,

Sir, your humble servant, Melinda.'

Why, the devil's in the young fellows of this age; they are ten times worse than they were in my time: had he made my daughter a whore, and forswore it like a gentleman, I could almost have pardon'd it, but to tell tales before-hand is monstrous—Hang it! I can fetch down a woodcock or a snipe, and why not a hat and cockade? I have a case of good pistols, and have a good mind to try.

Enter WORTHY.

Worthy! your servant.

Wor. I'm sorry, sir, to be the messenger of ill news.

Bal. I apprehend it, sir; you have heard that my son Owen is past recovery.

Wor. My letters say he's dead, sir.

Bal. He's happy, and I am satisfied: the stroke of Heaven I can bear, but injuries from men, Mr Worthy, are not so easily supported.

Wor. I hope, sir, you're under no apprehensions of wrong from any body.

Bal. You know I ought to be.

Wor. You wrong my honour in believing I could know any thing to your prejudice without resenting it as much as you should.

Bal. This letter, sir, which I tear in pieces, to conceal the person that sent it, informs me that Plume has a design upon Sylvia, and that you are privy to't.

Wor. Nay, then, sir, I must do myself justice, and endeavour to find out the author. [*Takes up a bit.*] Sir, I know the hand, and if you refuse to discover the contents, Melinda shall tell me. [*Going.*

Bal. Hold, sir; the contents I have told you already, only with this circumstance, that her intimacy with Mr Worthy had drawn the secret from him.

Wor. Her intimacy with me! Dear sir! let me pick up the pieces of this letter, 'twill give me such a power over her pride, to have her own an intimacy under her hand—This was the luckiest accident! [*Gathering up the letter.*] The aspersion, sir, was nothing but malice, the effect of a little quarrel betwen her and Mrs Sylvia.

Bal. Are you sure of that, sir?

Wor. Her maid gave me the history of part of the battle just now, as she overheard it: but I hope, sir, your daughter has suffered nothing upon the account.

Bal. No, no, poor girl; she's so afflicted with the news of her brother's death, that, to avoid company, she begg'd leave to go into the country.

Wor. And is she gone?

Bal. I could not refuse her, she was so pressing; the coach went from the door the minute before you came.

Wor. So pressing to be gone, sir?—I find her fortune will give her the same airs with Melinda, and then Plume and I may laugh at one another.

Bal. Like enough: women are as subject to pride as men are; and why mayn't great women as well as great men forget their old acquaintance?—But come, where's this young fellow? I love him so well, it would break the heart of me to think him a rascal—I am glad my daughter's gone fairly off though. [*Aside.*] Where does the captain quarter?

Wor. At Horton's; I am to meet him there two hours hence, and we should be glad of your company.

Bal. Your pardon, dear Worthy! I must allow a day or two to the death of my son. The decorum of mourning is what we owe the world, because they pay it to us: afterwards, I'm yours over a bottle, or how you will.

Wor. Sir, I'm your humble servant.

[*Exeunt apart.*

SCENE III.—*The Street.*

Enter KITE, *with* COSTAR PEARMAIN *in one hand, and* THOMAS APPLETREE *in the other, drunk.*

KITE *sings.*

Our 'prentice Tom may now refuse
To wipe his scoundrel master's shoes,
For now he's free to sing and play
Over the hills, and far away.———*Over, &c.*

[*The mob sing the chorus.*

We shall lead more happy lives,
By getting rid of brats and wives,
That scold and brawl both night and day,
Over the hills, and far away.———*Over, &c.*

Kite. Hey, boys! thus we soldiers live! drink, sing, dance, play—we live, as one should say—we live—'tis impossible to tell how we live—we are all princes—why—why, you are a king—you are an emperor, and I'm a prince—now—an't we?

Tho. No, serjeant, I'll be no emperor.

Kite. No!

Tho. I'll be a justice of peace.

Kite. A justice of peace, man!

Tho. Ay, wauns will I; for since this pressing act, they are greater than any emperor under the sun.

Kite. Done; you are a justice of peace, and you are a king, and I am a duke, and a rum duke, an't I?

Cost. Ay, but I'll be no king.

Kite. What then?

Cost. I'll be a queen.

Kite. A queen!

Cost. Ay, of England; that's greater than any king of 'em all.

Kite. Bravely said, faith!—huzza for the queen. [*Huzza.*] But hark'e, you Mr Justice, and you Mr Queen, did you ever see the king's picture?

Both. No, no, no.

Kite. I wonder at that; I have two of 'em set in gold, and as like his majesty, God bless the mark!—See here, they are set in gold.

[*Takes two broad pieces out of his pocket, presents one to each.*

Tho. The wonderful works of nature!

[*Looking at it.*

Cost. What's this written about? here's a posy, I believe. Ca-ro-lus!—what's that, serjeant?

Kite. O! Carolus! why, Carolus is Latin for King George; that's all.

Cost. 'Tis a fine thing to be a scollard—Serjeant, will you part with this? I'll buy it on you, if it come within the compass of a crown.

Kite. A crown! never talk of buying; 'tis the same thing among friends, you know; I'll present them to ye both; you shall give me as good a thing. Put 'em up, and remember your old friend when I am over the hills, and far away.

[*They sing, and put up the money.*

Enter PLUME, *singing.*

Over the hills, and over the main,
To Flanders, Portugal, or Spain,
The king commands, and we'll obey,
Over the hills, and far away.

Come on, my men of mirth, away with it; I'll make one among ye.—Who are these hearty lads?

Kite. Off with your hats; 'ounds! off with your hats: this is the captain, the captain.

Tho. We have seen captains afore now, mun.

Cost. Ay, and lieutenant-captains too. 'Sflesh! I'll keep on my nab.

Tho. And I'se scarcely d'off mine for any captain in England. My vether's a freeholder.

Plume. Who are those jolly lads, serjeant?

Kite. A couple of honest brave fellows, that are willing to serve the king: I have entertain'd 'em just now as volunteers under your honour's command.

Plume. And good entertainment they shall have: volunteers are the men I want; those are the men fit to make soldiers, captains, generals.

Cost. Wounds, Tummas, what's this! are you listed?

Tho. Flesh! not I: are you, Costar?

Cost. Wounds! not I.

Kite. What! not listed! ha, ha, ha! a very good jest, i'faith.

Cost. Come, Tummas, we'll go home.

Tho. Ay, ay, come.

Kite. Home! for shame, gentlemen; behave yourselves better before your captain. Dear Tummas, honest Costar!

Tho. No, no, we'll be gone.

Kite. Nay, then, I command you to stay: I place you both centinels in this place for two hours, to watch the motion of St Mary's clock you, and you the motion of St Chad's; and he that dares stir from his post till he be relieved, shall have my sword in his guts the next minute.

Plume. What's the matter, serjeant? I'm afraid you are too rough with these gentlemen.

Kite. I'm too mild, sir; they disobey command, sir; and one of 'em should be shot, for an example to the other.

Cost. Shot! Tummas!

Plume. Come, gentlemen, what's the matter?

Tho. We don't know; the noble serjeant is pleas'd to be in a passion, sir—but—

Kite. They disobey command; they deny their being listed.

Tho. Nay, serjeant, we don't downright deny it, neither; that we dare not do, for fear of being shot; but we humbly conceive, in a civil way, and begging your worship's pardon, that we may go home.

Plume. That's easily known. Have either of you receiv'd any of the king's money?

Cost. Not a brass farthing, sir.

Kite. They have each of them receiv'd one-and-twenty shillings, and 'tis now in their pockets.

Cost. Wounds! if I have a penny in my pocket but a bent six-pence, I'll be content to be listed, and shot into the bargain.

Tho. And I:—look ye here, sir.

Cost. Nothing but the king's picture, that the serjeant gave me just now.

Kite. See there, a guinea, one-and-twenty shillings; t'other has the fellow on't.

Plume. The case is plain, gentlemen; the goods are found upon you: those pieces of gold are worth one-and-twenty shillings each.

Cost. So it seems that Carolus is one-and-twenty shillings in Latin.

Tho. 'Tis the same thing in Greek, for we are listed.

Cost. Flesh! but we an't, Tummas. I desire to be carried before the mayor, captain.

[*Captain and serjeant whisper the while.*

Plume. 'Twill never do, Kite—your damned tricks will ruin me at last—I won't lose the fellows, though, if I can help it—Well, gentlemen, there must be some trick in this: my serjeant offers to take his oath that you are fairly listed.

Tho. Why, captain, we know that you soldiers have more liberty of conscience than other folks; but for me or neighbour Costar here to take such an oath, 'twould be downright perjuration.

Plume. Look'e, rascal, you villain! If I find that you have impos'd upon these two honest fellows, I'll trample you to death, you dog—Come, how was't?

Tho. Nay, then we'll speak. Your serjeant, as you say, is a rogue, an't like your worship, begging your worship's pardon—and—

Cost. Nay, Tummas, let me speak, you know I can read.——And so, sir, he gave us those two pieces of money for pictures of the king, by way of a present.

Plume. How? by way of a present! the son of a whore! I'll teach him to abuse honest fellows like you! scoundrel! rogue! villain!

[*Beats off the serjeant, and follows.*

Both. O brave, noble captain! huzza. A brave captain, faith!

Cost. Now, Tummas, Carolus is Latin for a beating. This is the bravest captain I ever saw —Wounds! I've a month's mind to go with him.

Enter PLUME.

Plume. A dog, to abuse two such honest fellows as you——Look'e, gentlemen, I love a pretty fellow; I come among you as an officer, to list soldiers, not as a kidnapper, to steal slaves.

Cost. Mind that, Tummas.

Plume. I desire no man to go with me but as I went myself: I went a volunteer, as you or you may do, for a little time carried a musket, and now I command a company.

Tho. Mind that, Costar. A sweet gentleman!

Plume. 'Tis true, gentlemen, I might take an advantage of you: the king's money was in your pockets, my serjeant was ready to take his oath you were listed; but I scorn to do a base thing: you are both of you at your liberty.

Cost. Thank you, noble captain——I'cod! I cann't find in my heart to leave him, he talks so finely.

Tho. Ay, Costar, would he always hold in this mind.

Plume. Come, my lads, one thing more I'll tell you:—you're both young, tight fellows, and the army is the place to make you men for ever: every man has his lot, and you have yours: what think you of a purse of French gold out of a monsieur's pocket, after you have dash'd out his brains with the but-end of your firelock? eh!

Cost. Wauns! I'll have it. Captain—give me a shilling: I'll follow you to the end of the world.

Tho. Nay, dear Costar! do'na: be advis'd.

Plume. Here, my hero, here are two guineas for thee, as earnest of what I'll do farther for thee.

Tho. Do'na take it, do'na, dear Costar!

[*Cries, and pulls back his arm.*

Cost. I wull—I wull—Waunds! my mind gives me that I shall be a captain myself.—I take your money, sir, and now I am a gentleman.

Plume. Give me thy hand, and now you and I will travel the world o'er, and command it wherever we tread.—Bring your friend with you, if you can. [*Aside.*

Cost. Well, Tummas, must we part?

Tho. No, Costar, I cannot leave thee—Come, captain, I'll e'en go along too; and if you have two honester, simpler lads in your company than we two have been, I'll say no more.

Plume. Here, my lad. [*Gives him money.*] Now, your name?

Tho. Tummas Appletree.

Plume. And yours?

Cost. Costar Pearmain.

Plume. Well said, Costar! Born where?

Tho. Both in Herefordshire.

Plume. Very well. Courage, my lads——Now we'll

[*Sings.*] Over the hills, and far away.
Courage, boys; it is one to ten
But we return all gentlemen;
While conq'ring colours we display,
Over the hills, and far away.

Kite, take care of 'em.

Enter KITE.

Kite. A'n't you a couple of pretty fellows, now! Here you have complained to the captain, I am to be turn'd out, and one of you will be serjeant. Which of you is to have my halberd?

Both Rec. I.

Kite. So you shall—in your guts.—March, you sons of whores! [*Beats them off.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Market-Place.*

Enter PLUME *and* WORTHY.

Wor. I cannot forbear admiring the equality of our two fortunes:—we love two ladies; they meet us half way; and just as we were upon the point of leaping into their arms, fortune drops in their laps, pride possesses their hearts, a maggot fills their heads, madness takes them by the tails; they snort, kick up their heels, and away they run.

Plume. And leave us here to mourn upon the shore—a couple of poor melancholy monsters—What shall we do?

Wor. I have a trick for mine:—the letter, you know, and the fortune-teller.

Plume. And I have a trick for mine.

Wor. What is't?

Plume. I'll never think of her again.

Wor. No!

Plume. No; I think myself above administering to the pride of any woman, were she worth twelve thousand a-year; and I ha'n't the vanity to believe I shall gain a lady worth twelve hundred. The generous, good-natur'd Sylvia, in her smock, I admire; but the haughty and scornful Sylvia, with her fortune, I despise—What! sneak out of town, and not so much as a word, a line, a compliment!—'Sdeath! how far off does she live? I'll go and break her windows.

Wor. Ha, ha, ha! ay, and the window-bars too, to come at her. Come, come, friend, no more of your rough military airs.

Enter KITE.

Kite. Captain, captain! Sir, look yonder, she's a-coming this way. 'Tis the prettiest, cleanest, little tit!

Plume. Now, Worthy, to shew you how much I'm in love—here she comes. But, Kite, what is that great country fellow with her?

Kite. I cann't tell, sir.

Enter ROSE, *followed by her Brother* BULLOCK, *with Chickens on her Arm, in a Basket.*

Rose. Buy chickens, young and tender chickens, young and tender chickens.

Plume. Here, you chickens.

Rose. Who calls?

Plume. Come hither, pretty maid!

Rose. Will you please to buy, sir?

Wor. Yes, child, we'll both buy.

Plume. Nay, Worthy, that's not fair; market for yourself.—Come, child, I'll buy all you have.

Rose. Then all I have is at your service.

[*Courtesies.*

Wor. Then must I shift for myself, I find. [*Exit.*

Plume. Let me see; young and tender you say.

[*Chucks her under the chin.*

Rose. As ever you tasted in your life, sir.

Plume. Come, I must examine your basket to the bottom, my dear!

Rose. Nay, for that matter, put in your hand; feel, sir; I warrant my ware is as good as any in the market.

Plume. And I'll buy it all, child, were it ten times more.

Rose. Sir, I can furnish you.

Plume. Come, then we won't quarrel about the price; they're fine birds.—Pray, what's your name, pretty creature?

Rose. Rose, sir. My father is a farmer within three short miles o' the town: we keep this market; I sell chickens, eggs, and butter, and my brother Bullock there sells corn.

Bul. Come, sister, haste, we shall be late home. [*Whistles about the stage.*

Plume. Kite! [*Tips him the wink, he returns it.*] Pretty Mrs Rose—you have—let me see—how many?

Rose. A dozen, sir, and they are richly worth a crown.

Bul. Come, Ruose; I sold fifty strake of barley to-day in half this time; but you will higgle and higgle for a penny more than the commodity is worth.

Rose. What's that to you, oaf? I can make as much out of a groat as you can out of four pence, I'm sure—The gentleman bids fair, and when I meet with a chapman, I know how to make the best of him—And so, sir, I say, for a crown-piece the bargain's yours.

Plume. Here's a guinea, my dear!

Rose. I cann't change your money, sir.

Plume. Indeed, indeed, but you can—my lodging is hard by, chicken! and we'll make change there. [*Goes off; she follows him.*

Kite. So, sir, as I was telling you, I have seen one of these hussars eat up a ravelin for his breakfast, and afterwards pick his teeth with a palisado.

Bul. Ay, you soldiers see very strange things: but pray, sir, what is a rabelin?

Kite. Why, 'tis like a modern minc'd pie, but the crust is confounded hard, and the plums are somewhat hard of digestion.

Bul. Then your palisado, pray what may he be? Come, Ruose, pray ha' done.

Kite. Your palisado is a pretty sort of bodkin, about the thickness of my leg.

Bul. That's a fib, I believe. [*Aside.*] Eh! where's Ruose? Ruose, Ruose! S'flesh! where's Ruose gone?

Kite. She's gone with the captain.

Bul. The captain! wauns! there's no pressing of women, sure.

Kite. But there is, sure.

Bul. If the captain shou'd press Ruose, I should be ruin'd——Which way went she? Oh! the devil take your rabelins and palisadoes!

[*Exit.*

Kite. You shall be better acquainted with them, honest Bullock, or I shall miss of my aim.

Enter WORTHY.

Wor. Why, thou art the most useful fellow in nature to your captain, admirable in your way, I find.

Kite. Yes, sir, I understand my business, I will say it.

Wor. How came you so qualify'd?

Kite. You must know, sir, I was born a gipsy, and bred among that crew till I was ten years old; there I learned canting and lying: I was bought from my mother Cleopatra by a certain nobleman for three pistoles, who, liking my beauty, made me his page; there I learn'd impudence and pimping: I was turn'd off for wearing my lord's linen, and drinking my lady's ratafia, and turn'd bailiff's follower; there I learn'd bullying and swearing: I at last got into the army; and there I learn'd whoring and drinking—so that if your worship pleases to cast up the whole sum, viz. canting, lying, impudence, pimping, bullying, swearing, whoring, drinking, and a halberd, you will find the sum total amount to a Recruiting Serjeant.

Wor. And, pray, what induced you to turn soldier?

Kite. Hunger and ambition. The fears of starving and hopes of a truncheon led me along to a gentleman with a fair tongue and fair periwig, who loaded me with promises; but, 'gad, it was the lightest load that ever I felt in my life. ——He promised to advance me; and indeed he did so—to a garret in the Savoy.—I asked him why he put me in prison? he called me lying dog, and said I was in garrison; and indeed 'tis a garrison that may hold out till doomsday before I should desire to take it again.—But here comes Justice Balance.

Enter BALANCE *and* BULLOCK.

Bal. Here, you serjeant, where's your captain? Here's a poor foolish fellow comes clamouring to me, with a complaint that your captain has press'd his sister. Do you know any thing of this matter, Worthy?

Wor. Ha, ha, ha!—I know his sister is gone with Plume to his lodging, to sell him some chickens.

Bal. Is that all?—The fellow's a fool.

Bul. I know that, an't like your worship; but if your worship pleases to grant me a warrant to bring her before your worship, for fear of the worst.

Bal. Thou'rt mad, fellow;—thy sister's safe enough.

Kite. I hope so too. [*Aside.*

Wor. Hast thou no more sense, fellow, than to believe that the captain can list women?

Bul. I know not whether they list them, or what they do with them, but I'm sure they carry as many women as men with them out of the country.

Bal. But how came you not to go along with your sister?

Bul. Lord, sir, I thought no more of her going than I do of the day I shall die: but this gentleman here, not suspecting any hurt neither, I believe—you thought no harm, friend, did you?

Kite. Lack-a-day, sir, not I——only that I believe I shall marry her to-morrow.

Bal. I begin to smell powder. Well, friend, but what did that gentleman with you?

Bul. Why, sir, he entertain'd me with a fine story of a great sea-fight between the Hungarians, I think it was, and the wild Irish.

Kite. And so, sir, while we were in the heat of battle—the captain carry'd off the baggage.

Bal. Serjeant, go along with this fellow to your captain, give him my humble service, and desire him to discharge the wench, though he has listed her.

Bul. Ay, and if she ben't free for that, he shall have another man in her place.

Kite. Come, honest friend;—you shall go to my quarters instead of the captain's. [*Aside.*

[*Exeunt* KITE *and* BULLOCK.

Bal. We must get this mad captain his complement of men, and send him packing, else he'll over-run the country.

Wor. You see, sir, how little he values your daughter's disdain.

Bal. I like him the better: I was just such another fellow at his age: I never set my heart upon any woman so much as to make myself uneasy at the disappointment: but what was very surprising, both to myself and friends, I chang'd, o' th' sudden, from the most fickle lover to the most constant husband in the world.—But how goes your affair with Melinda?

Wor. Very slowly. Cupid had formerly wings, but I think in this age he goes upon crutches; or, I fancy, Venus had been dallying with her cripple Vulcan when my amour commenc'd, which has made it go on so lamely.—My mistress has got a captain too, but such a captain!—as I live, yonder he comes!

Bal. Who, that bluff fellow in the sash? I don't know him.

Wor. But I engage he knows you and every body at first sight: his impudence were a prodigy, were not his ignorance proportionable; he has the most universal acquaintance of any man living, for he won't be alone, and nobody will keep him company twice: then he's a Cæsar among the women, *veni, vidi, vici,* that's all. If he has but talk'd with the maid, he swears he has lain with the mistress: but the most surprising part of his character is his memory, which is the most prodigious and the most trifling in the world.

Bal. I have met with such men; and I take this good-for-nothing memory to proceed from a certain contexture of the brain which is purely adapted to impertinencies, and there they lodge secure, the owner having no thoughts of his own to disturb them. I have known a man as perfect as a chronologer as to the day and year of most important transactions, but be altogether ignorant in the causes or consequences of any one thing of moment: I have known another acquire so much by travel as to tell you the names of most places in Europe, with their distances of miles, leagues, or hours, as punctually as a post-boy; but for any thing else as ignorant as the horse that carries the mail.

Wor. This is your man, sir; add but the traveller's privilege of lying, and even that he abuses: this is the picture, behold the life.

Enter BRAZEN.

Braz. Mr Worthy, I'm your servant, and so forth—Hark'e, my dear!

Wor. Whispering, sir, before company is not manners, and when nobody's by 'tis foolish.

Braz. Company! *Mort de ma vie!* I beg the gentleman's pardon—who is he?

Wor. Ask him.

Braz. So I will, my dear!—I am your servant, and so forth—Your name, my dear!

Bal. Very laconic, sir.

Braz. Laconic! a very good name, truly. I have known several of the Laconics abroad. Poor Jack Laconic! he was killed at the battle of Landen. I remember that he had a blue riband in his hat that very day, and after he fell we found a piece of neat's tongue in his pocket.

Bal. Pray, sir, did the French attack us, o r them, at Landen?

Braz. The French attack us! Oons! sir, are you a Jacobite?

Bal. Why that question?

Braz. Because none but a Jacobite could think that the French durst attack us—No, sir, we attack'd them on the—I have reason to remember the time, for I had two-and-twenty horses kill'd under me that day.

Wor. Then, sir, you must have rid mighty hard.

Bal. Or, perhaps, sir, like my countrymen, you rid upon half-a-dozen horses at once.

Braz. What do ye mean, gentleman? I tell you they were kill'd, all torn to pieces by cannon-shot, except six I stak'd to death upon the enemy's *chevaux de frise.*

Bal. Noble captain, may I crave your name?

Braz. Brazen, at your service.

Bal. Oh, Brazen! a very good name. I have known several of the Brazens abroad.

Wor. Do you know one Captain Plume, sir?

Braz. Is he any thing related to Frank Plume in Northamptonshire?—Honest Frank! many, many a dry bottle have we crack'd hand to fist. You must have known his brother Charles, that was concern'd in the India Company; he marry'd the daughter of Old Tonguepad, the master in chancery; a very pretty woman, only she squinted a little: she died in child-bed of her first child, but the child surviv'd; 'twas a daughter, but whether it was call'd Margaret or Margery, upon my soul I cann't remember. [*Looking on his watch.*] But, gentlemen, I must meet a lady, a twenty thousand pounder, presently, upon the walk by the water—Worthy, your servant; Laconic, yours. [*Exit.*

Bal. If you can have so mean an opinion of Melinda as to be jealous of this fellow, I think she ought to give you cause to be so.

Wor. I don't think she encourages him so much for gaining herself a lover, as to set up a rival. Were there any credit to be given to his words, I should believe Melinda had made him this assignation. I must go see. Sir, you'll pardon me. [*Exit.*

Bal. Ay, ay, sir, you're a man of business—But what have we got here?

Enter ROSE, *singing.*

Rose. And I shall be a lady, a captain's lady, and ride single upon a white horse, with a star, upon a velvet side-saddle; and I shall go to London, and see the tombs, and the lions, and the king and queen.—Sir, an' please your worship, I have often seen your worship ride through our grounds a-hunting, begging your worship's pardon.—Pray, what may this lace be worth a-yard?

[*Shewing some lace.*

Bal. Right Mechlin, by this light!—Where did you get this lace, child?

Rose. No matter for that, sir; I came honestly by it.

Bal. I question it much. [*Aside.*

Rose. And see here, sir, a fine Turkey-shell snuff-box, and fine mangere: see here. [*Takes snuff affectedly.*] The captain learnt me how to take it with an air.

Bal. O ho! the captain! now the murder's out. And so the captain taught you to take it with an air?

Rose. Yes, and give it with an air too.—Will your worship please to taste my snuff?

[*Offers the box affectedly.*

Bal. You are a very apt scholar, pretty maid! And pray, what did you give the captain for these fine things?

Rose. He's to have my brother for a soldier, and two or three sweethearts I have in the country; they shall go with the captain. Oh! he's the finest man, and the humblest withal! Would you believe it, sir? he carried me up with him to his own chamber with as much fam-mam-mil-yararality as if I had been the best lady in the land.

Bal. Oh! he's a mighty familiar gentleman as can be.

Enter PLUME, *singing.*

Plume. *But it is not so*
With those that go
Thro' frost and snow———
Most à propos,
My maid with the milking-pail.

[Takes hold of ROSE.

How, the justice! then I'm arraign'd, condemn'd, and executed.

Bal. Oh, my noble captain!

Rose. And my noble captain, too, sir.

Plume. 'Sdeath! child, are you mad?—Mr Balance, I am so full of business about my recruits, that I ha'n't a moment's time to—I have just now three or four people to———

Bal. Nay, captain, I must speak to you——

Rose. And so must I too, captain.

Plume. Any other time, sir—I cannot for my life, sir——

Bal. Pray, sir———

Plume. Twenty thousand things—I wou'd, but—now, sir, pray—Devil take me—I cannot—I must— [*Breaks away.*

Bal. Nay, I'll follow you. [*Exit.*

Rose. And I too. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The Walk by the Severn Side.*

Enter MELINDA *and her maid* LUCY.

Mel. And pray was it a ring, or buckle, or pendents, or knots; or in what shape was the almighty gold transform'd that has brib'd you so much in his favour?

Lucy. Indeed, madam, the last bribe I had from the captain was only a small piece of Flanders lace, for a cap.

Mel. Ay, Flanders lace is as constant a present from officers to their women, as something else is from their women to them. They every year bring over a cargo of lace, to cheat the king of his duty, and his subjects of their honesty.

Lucy. They only barter one sort of prohibited goods for another, madam.

Mel. Has any of 'em been bartering with you, Mrs Pert, that you talk so like a trader?

Lucy. Madam, you talk as peevish to me as if it were my fault! the crime is none of mine, though I pretend to excuse it: though he should not see you this week, can I help it? But as I was saying, madam, his friend, Captain Plume, has so taken him up these two days—

Mel. Pshaw! would his friend the captain were ty'd upon his back; I warrant he's never been sober since that confounded captain came to town. The devil take all officers, I say; they do the nation more harm, by debauching us at home, than they do good, by defending us abroad. No sooner a captain comes to town but all the young fellows flock about him, and we cann't keep a man to ourselves.

Lucy. One would imagine, madam, by your concern for Worthy's absence, that you should use him better when he's with you.

Mel. Who told you, pray, that I was concern'd for his absence? I'm only vex'd that I have had nothing said to me these two days: as one may love the treason and hate the traitor. Oh! here comes another captain, and a rogue that has the confidence to make love to me; but indeed I don't wonder at that, when he has the assurance to fancy himself a fine gentleman.

Lucy. If he should speak o' th' assignation, I should be ruin'd. [*Aside.*

Enter BRAZEN.

Braz. True to the touch, faith! [*Aside.*] Madam, I am your humble servant, and all that, madam. A fine river this same Severn—Do you love fishing, madam?

Mel. 'Tis a pretty melancholy amusement for lovers.

Braz. I'll go buy hooks and lines presently; for you must know, madam, that I have serv'd in Flanders against the French, in Hungary against the Turks, and in Tangier against the Moors, and I was never so much in love before; and, split me, madam, in all the campaigns I ever made, I have not seen so fine a woman as your ladyship.

Mel. And from all the men I ever saw, I never had so fine a compliment: but you soldiers are the best bred men, that we must allow.

Braz. Some of us, madam; but there are brutes among us too, very sad brutes: for my own part, I have always had the good luck to prove agreeable. I have had very considerable offers, madam—I might have married a German princess, worth fifty thousand crowns a-year, but her stove disgusted me. The daughter of a Turkish bashaw fell in love with me too, when I was a prisoner among the Infidels; she offered to rob her father of his treasure, and make her escape with me; but I don't know how, my time was not come: hanging and marriage, you know, go by destiny: Fate has reserv'd me for a Shropshire lady, worth twenty thousand pounds. Do you know any such person, madam?

Mel. Extravagant coxcomb! [*Aside.*] To be sure, a great many ladies of that fortune would be proud of the name of Mrs Brazen.

Braz. Nay, for that matter, madam, there are women of very good quality of the name of Brazen.

Enter WORTHY.

Mel. Oh, are you there, gentleman!—Come, captain, we'll walk this way. Give me your hand.

Braz. My hand!—heart's blood and guts are at your service.—Mr Worthy, your servant, my dear! [*Exit, leading* MELINDA.

Wor. Death and fire! this is not to be borne.

Enter PLUME.

Plume. No more it is, faith.

Wor. What?

Plume. The March beer at The Raven. I have been doubly serving the king,—raising men and raising the excise. Recruiting and elections are rare friends to the excise.

Wor. You a'n't drunk?

Plume. No, no, whimsical only; I could be mighty foolish, and fancy myself mighty witty. Reason still keeps its throne, but it nods a little, that's all.

Wor. Then you're just fit for a frolic.

Plume. As fit as close pinners for a punk in the pit.

Wor. There's your play, then: recover me that vessel from that Tangerine.

Plume. She's well rigg'd, but how is she mann'd?

Wor. By Captain Brazen, that I told you of to-day: she is call'd the Melinda, a first rate I can assure you; she sheer'd off with him just now, on purpose to affront me; but according to your advice, I would take no notice, because I would seem to be above a concern for her behaviour:—but have a care of a quarrel.

Plume. No, no: I never quarrel with any thing in my cups but an oyster-wench or a cook-maid, and if they ben't civil, I knock 'em down. But hark'e, my friend, I'll make love, and I must make love—I tell you what, I'll make love like a platoon.

Wor. Platoon! how's that?

Plume. I'll kneel, stoop, and stand, faith:—most ladies are gain'd by platooning.

Wor. Here they come: I must leave you. [*Exit.*

Plume. So! now must I look as sober and demure as a whore at a christening.

Enter BRAZEN *and* MELINDA.

Braz. Who's that, madam?

Mel. A brother officer of yours, I suppose, sir.

Braz. Ay—my dear! [*To* PLUME.

Plume. My dear! [*Run and embrace.*

Braz. My dear boy! how is't? Your name, my dear! If I be not mistaken I have seen your face.

Plume. I never saw yours in my life, my dear!

——but there's a face well known as the sun's, that shines on all, and is by all ador'd.

Braz. Have you any pretensions, sir?

Plume. Pretensions!

Braz. That is, sir, have you ever served abroad?

Plume. I have serv'd at home, sir, for ages serv'd this cruel fair, and that will serve the turn, sir.

Mel. So, between the fool and the rake, I shall bring a fine spot of work upon my hands! I see Worthy yonder: I could be content to be friends with him, would he come this way.

Braz. Will you fight for the lady, sir?

Plume. No, sir; but I'll have her notwithstanding.

Thou peerless princess of Salopian plains,
Envy'd by nymphs, and worshipp'd by the swains—

Braz. Oons! sir, not fight for her!

Plume. Pr'ythee be quiet—I shall be out—

Behold how humbly does the Severn glide,
To greet thee princess of the Severn side.

Braz. Don't mind him, madam—if he were not so well dress'd, I should take him for a poet; but I'll shew you the difference presently. Come, madam, we'll place you between us; and now the longest sword carries her. [*Draws.*

Mel. [*Shrieking.*]

Enter WORTHY.

Oh, Mr Worthy! save me from these madmen. [*Exit with* WORTHY.

Plume. Ha, ha, ha! why don't you follow, sir, and fight the bold ravisher?

Braz. No, sir, you are my man.

Plume. I don't like the wages; I won't be your man.

Braz. Then you're not worth my sword.

Plume. No! pray what did it cost?

Braz. It cost me twenty pistoles in France, and my enemies thousands of lives in Flanders.

Plume. Then they had a dear bargain.

Enter SYLVIA, *in man's apparel.*

Syl. Save ye, save ye, gentlemen.

Braz. My dear! I'm yours.

Plume. Do you know the gentleman?

Braz. No, but I will presently—Your name, my dear?

Syl. Wilful. Jack Wilful, at your service.

Braz. What, the Kentish Wilfuls, or those of Staffordshire?

Syl. Both, sir, both; I'm related to all the Wilfuls in Europe, and I'm head of the family at present.

Plume. Do you live in this country, sir?

Syl. Yes, sir, I live where I stand; I have neither home, house, or habitation, beyond this spot of ground.

Braz. What are you, sir?

Syl. A rake.

Plume. In the army, I presume.

Syl. No, but I intend to list immediately. Look'e, gentlemen, he that bids the fairest has me.

Braz. Sir, I'll prefer you; I'll make you a corporal this minute.

Plume. Corporal! I'll make you my companion; you shall eat with me.

Braz. You shall drink with me.

Plume. You shall lie with me, you young rogue. [*Kisses.*

Braz. You shall receive your pay, and do no duty.

Syl. Then you must make me a field-officer.

Plume. Pho, pho, pho! I'll do more than all this; I'll make you a corporal, and give you a brevet for serjeant.

Braz. Can you read and write, sir?

Syl. Yes.

Braz. Then your business is done—I'll make you chaplain to the regiment.

Syl. Your promises are so equal that I'm at a loss to choose. There is one Plume that I hear much commended in town; pray, which of you is Captain Plume.

Plume. I am Captain Plume.

Braz. No, no, I am Captain Plume.

Syl. Hey-day!

Plume. Captain Plume! I'm your servant, my dear!

Braz. Captain Brazen! I'm yours—The fellow dares not fight. [*Aside.*

Enter KITE.

Kite. Sir, if you please—— [*Goes to whisper* PLUME.

Plume. No, no, there's your captain. Captain Plume, your serjeant has got so drunk he mistakes me for you.

Braz. He's an incorrigible sot. Here, my Hector of Holborn, here's forty shillings for you.

Plume. I forbid the banns. Look'e, friend, you shall list with Captain Brazen.

Syl. I will see Captain Brazen hang'd first; I will list with Captain Plume: I am a free-born Englishman, and will be a slave my own way.—Look'e, sir, will you stand by me? [*To* BRAZEN.

Braz. I warrant you, my lad.

Syl. Then I will tell you, Captain Brazen, [*To* PLUME] that you are an ignorant, pretending, impudent coxcomb.

Braz. Ay, ay, a sad dog.

Syl. A very sad dog. Give me the money, noble Captain Plume.

Plume. Then you won't list with Captain Brazen?

Syl. I won't.

Braz. Never mind him, child: I'll end the dispute presently.—Hark'e, my dear!— [*Takes* PLUME *to one side of the stage, and entertains him in dumb show.*

Kite. Sir, he in the plain coat is Captain Plume; I am his serjeant, and will take my oath on't.

Syl. What! you are Serjeant Kite?

Kite. At your service.

Syl. Then I would not take your oath for a farthing.

Kite. A very understanding youth of his age! Pray, sir, let me look you full in the face.

Syl. Well, sir, what have you to say to my face?

Kite. The very image of my brother; two bullets of the same caliber were never so like: it must be Charles; Charles——

Syl. What do you mean by Charles?

Kite. The voice too, only a little variation in *F faut* flat. My dear brother! for I must call you so, if you should have the fortune to enter into the most noble society of the sword, I bespeak you for a comrade.

Syl. No, sir, I'll be the captain's comrade, if any body's.

Kite. Ambition! there again! 'tis a noble passion for a soldier; by that I gain'd this glorious halberd. Ambition! I see a commission in his face already. Pray, noble captain, give me leave to salute you. [*Offers to kiss her.*

Syl. What! men kiss one another?

Kite. We officers do; 'tis our way; we live together like man and wife, always either kissing or fighting: but I see a storm coming.

Syl. Now, serjeant, I shall see who is your captain, by your knocking down the other.

Kite. My captain scorns assistance, sir.

Braz. How dare you contend for any thing, and not dare to draw your sword? But you are a young fellow, and have not been much abroad: I excuse that; but pr'ythee resign the man, pr'ythee do: you are a very honest fellow.

Plume. You lie; and you are a son of a whore.

[*Draws, and makes up to* BRAZEN.

Braz. Hold, hold; did not you refuse to fight for the lady? [*Retiring.*

Plume. I always do; but for a man I'll fight knee-deep; so you lie again.

[PLUME *and* BRAZEN *fight a traverse or two about the stage;* SYLVIA *draws, and is held by* KITE, *who sounds to arms with his mouth, takes* SYLVIA *in his arms, and carries her off the stage.*

Braz. Hold! where's the man?

Plume. Gone.

Braz. Then what do we fight for? [*Puts up.* Now let's embrace, my dear!

Plume. With all my heart, my dear! [*Putting up.*] I suppose Kite has listed him by this time. [*Embraces.*

Braz. You are a brave fellow: I always fight with a man before I make him my friend; and if once I find he will fight, I never quarrel with him afterwards.—And now I'll tell you a secret, my dear friend! that lady we frighten'd out of the walk just now, I found in bed this morning, so beautiful, so inviting! I presently lock'd the door—but I'm a man of honour—but I believe I shall marry her nevertheless—her twenty thousand pounds, you know, will be a pretty conveniency. I had an assignation with her here, but your coming spoil'd my sport. Curse you, my dear! but don't do so again——

Plume. No, no, my dear! men are my business at present. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The Walk continues.*

Enter ROSE *and* BULLOCK, *meeting.*

Rose. Where have you been, you great booby? you are always out of the way in the time of preferment.

Bul. Preferment! who should prefer me?

Rose. I would prefer you! who should prefer a man but a woman? Come, throw away that great club, hold up your head, cock your hat, and look big.

Bul. Ah, Ruose, Ruose! I fear somebody will look big sooner than folk think of. Here has been Cartwheel your sweetheart; what will become of him?

Rose. Look'e, I'm a great woman, and will provide for my relations: I told the captain how finely he play'd upon the tabor and pipe, so he set him down for drum-major.

Bul. Nay, sister, why did not you keep that place for me? you know I have always lov'd to be a-drumming, if it were but on a table or on a quart-pot.

Enter SYLVIA.

Syl. Had I but a commission in my pocket, I fancy my breeches would become me as well as any ranting fellow of 'em all; for I take a bold step, a rakish toss, a smart cock, and an impudent air, to be the principal ingredients in the composition of a captain.—What's here? Rose, my nurse's daughter! I'll go and practise. Come, child, kiss me at once. [*Kisses* ROSE.] And her brother too! Well, honest Dungfork, do you know the difference between a horse and a cart and a cart-horse? eh!

Bul. I presume that your worship is a captain, by your clothes and your courage.

Syl. Suppose I were, would you be contented to list, friend?

Rose. No, no; though your worship be a handsome man, there be others as fine as you. My brother is engag'd to Captain Plume.

Syl. Plume! do you know Captain Plume?

Rose. Yes, I do, and he knows me. He took the ribands out of his shirt-sleeves, and put them into my shoes: see there—I can assure you that I can do any thing with the captain.

Bul. That is, in a modest way, sir.—Have a care what you say, Ruose; don't shame your parentage.

Rose. Nay, for that matter, I am not so simple as to say that I can do any thing with the captain but what I may do with any body else.

Syl. So!—And pray what do you expect from this captain, child?

Rose. I expect, sir!—I expect—but he ordered me to tell nobody—but suppose he should propose to marry me?

Syl. You should have a care, my dear! men will promise any thing before-hand.

Rose. I know that; but he promised to marry me afterwards.

Bul. Wauns! Ruose, what have you said?

Syl. Afterwards! After what?

Rose. After I had sold my chickens—I hope there's no harm in that.

Enter PLUME.

Plume. What, Mr Wilful, so close with my market-woman?

Syl. I'll try if he loves her. [*Aside.*] Close, sir? ay, and closer yet, sir. Come, my pretty maid! you and I will withdraw a little.

Plume. No, no, friend, I ha'n't done with her yet.

Syl. Nor have I begun with her; so I have as good a right as you have.

Plume. Thou'rt a bloody impudent fellow!

Syl. Sir, I would qualify myself for the service.

Plume. Hast thou really a mind to the service?

Syl. Yes, sir; so let her go.

Rose. Pray, gentlemen, don't be so violent.

Plume. Come, leave it to the girl's own choice. Will you belong to me or to that gentleman?

Rose. Let me consider; you're both very handsome.

Plume. Now the natural inconstancy of her sex begins to work.

Rose. Pray, sir, what will you give me?

Bul. Dunna be angry, sir, that my sister should be mercenary, for she's but young.

Syl. Give thee, child! I'll set thee above scandal; you shall have a coach with six before and six behind; an equipage to make vice fashionable, and put virtue out of countenance.

Plume. Pho! that's easily done. I'll do more for thee, child; I'll buy you a furbelow-scarf, and give you a ticket to see a play.

Bul. A play! wauns! Ruose, take the ticket, and let's see the show.

Syl. Look'e, captain, if you won't resign, I'll go list with Captain Brazen this minute.

Plume. Will you list with me if I give up my title?

Syl. I will.

Plume. Take her; I'll change a woman for a man at any time.

Rose. I have heard before, indeed, that you captains us'd to sell your men.

Bul. Pray, captain, do not send Ruose to the Western Indies.

Plume. Ha, ha, ha! West Indies! No, no, my honest lad; give me thy hand; nor you nor she shall move a step farther than I do. This gentleman is one of us, and will be kind to you, Mrs Rose.

Rose. But will you be so kind to me, sir, as the captain would?

Syl. I cann't be altogether so kind to you; my circumstances are not so good as the captain's; but I'll take care of you, upon my word.

Plume. Ay, ay, we'll all take care of her; she shall live like a princess, and her brother here shall be——What would you be?

Bul. Oh, sir, if you had not promis'd the place of drum-major!

Plume. Ay, that is promis'd; but what think you of barrack-master? you are a person of understanding, and barrack-master you shall be—But what's become of this same Cartwheel you told me of, my dear?

Rose. We'll go fetch him—Come, brother barrack-master—We shall find you at home, noble captain? [*Exeunt* ROSE *and* BULLOCK.

Plume. Yes, yes; and now, sir, here are your forty shillings.

Syl. Captain Plume, I despise your listing-money; if I do serve 'tis purely for love—of that wench, I mean—for you must know that among my other sallies I've spent the best part of my fortune in search of a maid, and could never find one hitherto; so you may be assured I'd not sell my freedom under a less purchase than I did my estate—so before I list I must be certify'd that this girl is a virgin.

Plume. Mr Wilful, I cann't tell you how you can be certify'd in that point till you try; but upon my honour she may be a vestal for aught that I know to the contrary. I gain'd her heart indeed by some trifling presents and promises, and knowing that the best security for a woman's heart is her person, I would have made myself master of that too, had not the jealousy of my impertinent landlady interposed.

Syl. So you only want an opportunity for accomplishing your designs upon her?

Plume. Not at all; I have already gain'd my ends, which were only the drawing in one or two of her followers. The women, you know, are the loadstones every where; gain the wives, and you are caress'd by the husbands; please the mistress, and you are valued by the gallants; secure an interest with the finest women at court, and you procure the favour of the greatest men; kiss the prettiest country wenches, and you are sure of listing the lustiest fellows. Some people call this artifice, but I term it stratagem, since it is so main a part of the service: besides, the fatigue of recruiting is so intolerable, that unless we could make ourselves some pleasure amidst the pain, no mortal man would be able to bear it.

Syl. Well, sir, I am satisfied as to the point in debate; but now let me beg you to lay aside

your recruiting airs, put on the man of honour, and tell me plainly what usage I must expect when I am under your command?

Plume. You must know, in the first place, then, I hate to have gentlemen in my company; they are always troublesome and expensive, sometimes dangerous: and 'tis a constant maxim amongst us, that those who know the least obey the best. Notwithstanding all this, I find something so agreeable about you that engages me to court your company; and I cann't tell how it is, but I should be uneasy to see you under the command of any body else.—Your usage will chiefly depend upon your behaviour; only this you must expect, that if you commit a small fault I will excuse it, if a great one I'll discharge you; for something tells me I shall not be able to punish you.

Syl. And something tells me that if you do discharge me 'twill be the greatest punishment you can inflict; for were we this moment to go upon the greatest dangers in your profession, they would be less terrible to me than to stay behind you—And now, your hand; this lists me—and now you are my captain.

Plume. Your friend. [*Kisses her.*] 'Sdeath! there's something in this fellow that charms me.

Syl. One favour I must beg—this affair will make some noise, and I have some friends that would censure my conduct, if I threw myself into the circumstance of a private centinel of my own head—I must therefore take care to be imprest by the act of parliament; you shall leave that to me.

Plume. What you please as to that—Will you lodge at my quarters in the mean time? you shall have part of my bed.

Syl. Oh fie! lie with a common soldier! would not you rather lie with a common woman?

Plume. No, faith, I'm not that rake that the world imagines. I've got an air of freedom which people mistake for lewdness in me, as they mistake formality in others for religion.—The world is all a cheat, only I take mine, which is undesign'd, to be more excusable than theirs, which is hypocritical. I hurt nobody but myself; they abuse all mankind—Will you lie with me?

Syl. No, no, captain; you forget Rose: she's to be my bed-fellow, you know.

Plume. I had forgot: pray be kind to her.

[*Exeunt severally.*

Enter MELINDA *and* LUCY.

Mel. 'Tis the greatest misfortune in nature for a woman to want a confidant: we are so weak that we can do nothing without assistance, and then a secret racks us worse than the cholic—I am at this minute so sick of a secret, that I'm ready to faint away——Help me, Lucy!

Lucy. Bless me! Madam, what's the matter?

Mel. Vapours only; I begin to recover.—If Sylvia were in town, I could heartily forgive her faults, for the ease of discovering my own.

Lucy. You are thoughtful, madam; am not I worthy to know the cause?

Mel. You are a servant, and a secret may make you saucy.

Lucy. Not unless you should find fault without a cause.

Mel. Cause or not cause, I must not lose the pleasure of chiding when I please. Women must discharge their vapours somewhere; and before we get husbands our servants must expect to bear with 'em.

Lucy. Then, madam, you had better raise me to a degree above a servant: you know my family; and that five hundred pounds would set me upon the foot of a gentlewoman, and make me worthy the confidence of any lady in the land; besides, madam, 'twill extremely encourage me in the great design I now have in hand.

Mel. I don't find that your design can be of any great advantage to you; 'twill please me indeed in the humour I have of being reveng'd on the fool, for his vanity of making love to me; so I don't much care if I do promise you five hundred pounds upon my day of marriage.

Lucy. That is the way, madam, to make me diligent in the vocation of a confidant, which I think is generally to bring people together.

Mel. Oh, Lucy! I can hold my secret no longer. You must know, that hearing of a famous fortune-teller in town, I went disguis'd, to satisfy a curiosity which has cost me dear. The fellow is certainly the devil, or one of his bosom-favourites:—he has told me the most surprising things of my past life.

Lucy. Things past, madam, can hardly be reckon'd surprising, because we know them already. Did he tell you any thing surprising that was to come?

Mel. One thing very surprising:—he said I should die a maid!

Lucy. Die a maid! come into the world for nothing!—Dear madam! if you should believe him, it might come to pass; for the bare thought on't might kill one in four-and-twenty hours—And did you ask him any questions about me?

Mel. You! why I pass'd for you.

Lucy. So 'tis I that am to die a maid—But the devil was a liar from the beginning; he cann't make me die a maid—I've put it out of his power already. [*Aside.*

Mel. I do but jest. I would have pass'd for you, and call myself Lucy; but he presently told me my name, my quality, my fortune, and gave me the whole history of my life. He told me of a lover I had in this country, and described Worthy exactly, but in nothing so well as in his present indifference—I fled to him for refuge here to-day; he never so much as encouraged me in my fright, but coldly told me that he was sorry for the accident, because it might give the town cause to censure my conduct; excus'd his not waiting on me home; made me a careless bow; and walk'd off—'Sdeath! I could have stabb'd him or myself; 'twas the same thing—Yonder he comes—I will so use him!

Lucy. Don't exasperate him; consider what the fortune-teller told you. Men are scarce; and

as times go, it is not impossible for a woman to die a maid.

Enter WORTHY.

Mel. No matter.

Wor. I find she's warm'd; I must strike while the iron is hot.—You've a great deal of courage, madam, to venture into the walks where you were so lately frightened.

Mel. And you have a quantity of impudence, to appear before me, that you so lately have affronted.

Wor. I had no design to affront you, nor appear before you either, madam: I left you here because I had business in another place, and came hither thinking to meet another person.

Mel. Since you find yourself disappointed, I hope you'll withdraw to another part of the walk.

Wor. The walk is broad enough for us both. [*They walk by one another, he with his hat cock'd, she fretting and tearing her fan.*] Will you please to take snuff, madam? [*He offers her his box, she strikes it out of his hand; while he is gathering it up,* BRAZEN *enters, and takes her round the waist; she cuffs him.*

Braz. What, here before me, my dear!

Mel. What means this insolence?

Lucy. Are you mad?—Don't you see Mr Worthy? [*To* BRAZEN.

Braz. No, no; I'm struck blind—Worthy! odso! well turn'd—My mistress has wit at her finger's ends—Madam, I ask your pardon; 'tis our way abroad—Mr Worthy, you're the happy man.

Wor. I don't envy your happiness very much, if the lady can afford no other sort of favours but what she has bestowed upon you.

Mel. I'm sorry the favour miscarry'd, for it was design'd for you, Mr Worthy; and be assur'd 'tis the last and only favour you must expect at my hands——Captain, I ask your pardon.

[*Exit with* LUCY.

Braz. I grant it——You see, Mr Worthy, 'twas only a random-shot; it might have taken off your head as well as mine. Courage, my dear! 'tis the fortune of war: but the enemy has thought fit to withdraw, I think.

Wor. Withdraw! Oons! sir, what d'ye mean by withdraw?

Braz. I'll shew you. [*Exit.*

Wor. She's lost, irrecoverably lost, and Plume's advice has ruined me. 'Sdeath! why should I, that knew her haughty spirit, be ruled by a man that's a stranger to her pride?

Enter PLUME.

Plume. Ha, ha, ha! a battle royal! Don't frown so, man; she's your own, I'll tell you: I saw the fury of her love in the extremity of her passion. The wildness of her anger is a certain sign that she loves you to madness. That rogue Kite began the battle with abundance of conduct, and will bring you off victorious; my life on't: he plays his part admirably: she's to be with him again presently.

Wor. But what could be the meaning of Brazen's familiarity with her!

Plume. You are no logician, if you pretend to draw consequences from the actions of fools—There's no arguing by the rule of reason upon a science without principles; and such is their conduct—Whim, unaccountable whim, hurries 'em on, like a man drunk with brandy before ten o'clock in the morning—But we lose our sport: Kite has opened above an hour ago: let's away.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Chamber; a Table with Books and Globes.* KITE, *disguised in a strange Habit, sitting at the Table.*

Kite. [*Rising.*] By the position of the heavens, gained from my observation upon these celestial globes, I find that Luna was a tide-waiter, Sol a surveyor, Mercury a thief, Venus a whore, Saturn an alderman, Jupiter a rake, and Mars a serjeant of grenadiers—and this is the system of Kite the conjurer.

Enter PLUME *and* WORTHY.

Plume. Well, what success?

Kite. I have sent away a shoemaker and a tailor already: one's to be a captain of marines, and the other a major of dragoons—I am to manage them at night—Have you seen the lady, Mr Worthy?

Wor. Ay, but it won't do—Have you shewed her her name, that I tore off from the bottom of the letter?

Kite. No, sir, I reserve that for the last stroke.

Plume. What letter?

Wor. One that I would not let you see, for fear that you should break windows in good earnest. Here, captain, put it into your pocket-book, and have it ready upon occasion.

[*Knocking at the door.*

Kite. Officers, to your posts. Tycho, mind the door.

[*Exeunt* PLUME *and* WORTHY. *Servant opens the door.*

Enter a Smith.

Smith. Well, master, are you the cunning man?

Kite. I am the learned Copernicus.

Smith. Well, master, I'm but a poor man, and I cann't afford above a shilling for my fortune.

Kite. Perhaps that is more than 'tis worth.

Smith. Look ye, doctor, let me have something that's good for my shilling, or I'll have my money again.

Kite. If there be faith in the stars, you shall have your shilling forty-fold—Your hand, countryman—You're by trade a smith.

Smith. How the devil should you know that?

Kite. Because the devil and you are brother tradesmen—You were born under Forceps.

Smith. Forceps, what's that?

Kite. One of the signs:—there's Leo, Sagittarius, Forceps, Furns, Dixmude, Namur, Brussels, Charleroy, and so forth—twelve of 'em—Let me see—did you ever make any bombs or cannon-bullets?

Smith. Not I.

Kite. You either have or will—The stars have decreed that you shall be——I must have more money, sir——your fortune's great.

Smith. Faith, doctor, I have no more.

Kite. Oh, sir, I'll trust you, and take it out of your arrears.

Smith. Arrears! what arrears?

Kite. The five hundred pound that is owing to you from the government.

Smith. Owing me!

Kite. Owing you, sir—Let me see your t'other hand——I beg your pardon; it will be owing to you, and the rogue of an agent will demand fifty per cent. for a fortnight's advance.

Smith. I'm in the clouds, doctor, all this while.

Kite. Sir, I am above 'em, among the stars—In two years three months and two hours you will be made captain of the forges to the grand train of artillery, and will have ten shillings a-day, and two servants——'Tis the decree of the stars, and of the fixed stars, that are as immoveable as your anvil——Strike, sir, while the iron is hot—Fly, sir, be gone.

Smith. What would you have me do, doctor? I wish the stars would put me in a way for this fine place.

Kite. The stars do—Let me see—ay, about an hour hence walk carelessly into the market-place, and you will see a tall slender gentleman cheapening a pennyworth of apples, with a cane hanging upon his button: this gentleman will ask you what's o'clock—he's your man, and the maker of your fortune; follow him, follow him—And now go home, and take leave of your wife and children—An hour hence exactly is your time.

Smith. A tall slender gentleman, you say, with a cane: pray, what sort of a head has the cane?

Kite. An amber head, with a black riband.

Smith. And pray, of what employment is the gentleman?

Kite. Let me see; he's either a collector of the excise, or a plenipotentiary, or a captain of grenadiers——I cann't tell exactly which——but he'll call you honest———Your name is—

Smith. Thomas.

Kite. He'll call you honest Tom.

Smith. But how the devil should he know my name?

Kite. Oh, there are several sorts of Toms—Tom o' Lincoln, Tom Tit, Tom Telltruth, Tom a' Beldam, and Tom Fool——Be gone—An hour hence precisely. [*Knocking at the door.*

Smith. You say he'll ask me what's o'clock?

Kite. Most certainly——and you'll answer you don't know—And be sure you look at St Mary's dial, for the sun won't shine, and if it should, you won't be able to tell the figures.

Smith. I will, I will. [*Exit.*

Plume. Well done, conjurer! go on, and prosper. [*Behind.*

Kite. As you were.

Enter a Butcher.

What, my old friend Pluck the butcher!—I offered the surly bull-dog five guineas this morning, and he refused it. [*Aside.*

But. So, Mr Conjurer, here's half-a-crown—And now you must understand——

Kite. Hold, friend, I know your business before-hand——

But. You're devilish cunning then, for I don't well know it myself.

Kite. I know more than you, friend—You have a foolish saying, that such a one knows no more than the man in the moon: I tell you the man in the moon knows more than all the men under the sun. Don't the moon see all the world?

But. All the world see the moon, I must confess.

Kite. Then she must see all the world, that's certain—Give me your hand——You're by trade either a butcher or a surgeon.

But. True, I am a butcher.

Kite. And a surgeon you will be; the employments differ only in the name—He that can cut up an ox may dissect a man; and the same dexterity that cracks a marrow-bone will cut off a leg or an arm.

But. What d'ye mean, doctor? what d'ye mean?

Kite. Patience, patience, Mr Surgeon-general; the stars are great bodies, and move slowly.

But. But what d'ye mean by surgeon-general, doctor?

Kite. Nay, sir, if your worship won't have patience, I must beg the favour of your worship's absence.

But. My worship! my worship! but why my worship?

Kite. Nay, then I have done. [*Sits.*

But. Pray, doctor—

Kite. Fire and fury, sir! [*Rises in a passion.*] Do you think the stars will be hurried? Do the stars owe you any money, sir, that you dare to dun their lordships at this rate?—Sir, I am porter to the stars, and I am ordered to let no dun come near their doors.

But. Dear doctor! I never had any dealing with the stars; they don't owe me a penny—but since you are their porter, please to accept of this half-crown to drink their healths, and don't be angry—

Kite. Let me see your hand then once more—Here has been gold—five guineas, my friend, in this very hand this morning.

But. Nay, then he is the devil—Pray, doctor, were you born of a woman, or did you come into the world of your own head?

Kite. That's a secret—This gold was offered

you by a proper, handsome man, called Hawk, or Buzzard, or ——

But. Kite, you mean.

Kite. Ay, ay, Kite.

But. As arrant a rogue as ever carried a halberd: the impudent rascal would have decoyed me for a soldier.

Kite. A soldier! a man of your substance for a soldier! your mother has an hundred pound, in hard money, lying, at this minute, in the hands of a mercer, not forty yards from this place.

But. Oons! and so she has, but very few know so much.

Kite. I know it, and that rogue, what's his name? Kite, knew it, and offered you five guineas to list, because he knew your poor mother would give the hundred for your discharge.

But. There's a dog, now—'Sflesh! doctor, I'll give you t'other half-crown, and tell me that this same Kite will be hang'd.

Kite. He's in as much danger as any man in the county of Salop.

But. There's your fee——But you have forgot the surgeon-general all this while.

Kite. You put the stars in a passion; [*Looks on his books*] but now they are pacified again—Let me see, did you never cut off a man's leg?

But. No.

Kite. Recollect, pray.

But. I say, no.

Kite. That's strange, wonderful strange! but nothing is strange to me; such wonderful changes have I seen—The second or third, ay, the third campaign that you make in Flanders, the leg of a great officer will be shattered by a great shot; you will be there accidentally, and with your cleaver chop off the limb at a blow. In short, the operation will be performed with so much dexterity, that, with general applause, you will be made surgeon-general of the whole army.

But. Nay, for the matter of cutting off a limb, I'll do't with any surgeon in Europe; but I have no thoughts of making a campaign.

Kite. You have no thoughts! what's matter for your thoughts? the stars have decreed it, and you must go.

But. The stars decree it! Oons! sir, the justices cann't press me.

Kite. Nay, friend, 'tis none of my business; I have done; only mind this,—you'll know more an hour and half hence; that's all. Farewell.

But. Hold, hold, doctor——Surgeon-general! what is the place worth, pray?

Kite. Five hundred pounds a-year, besides guineas for claps.

But. Five hundred pounds a-year!—An hour and a half hence, you say.

Kite. Pr'ythee, friend, be quiet, don't be troublesome; here's such a work to make a booby butcher accept of five hundred pounds a-year—But if you must hear it—I'll tell you in short: you'll be standing in your stall an hour and half hence, and a gentleman will come by with a snuff-box in his hand, and the tip of his handkerchief hanging out of his right pocket; he'll ask you the price of a loin of veal, and at the same time stroke your great dog upon the head, and call him Chopper.

But. Mercy on us!—Chopper is the dog's name.

Kite. Look'e there—what I say is true—things that are to come must come to pass—Get you home, sell off your stock, don't mind the whining and the snivelling of your mother and your sister; women always hinder preferment—make what money you can, and follow that gentleman; his name begins with a P.—mind that.—There will be the barber's daughter too, that you promised marriage to—she will be pulling and hauling you to pieces.

But. What, know Sally too!—he's the devil, and he needs must go that the devil drives. [*Going.*] ——The tip of his handkerchief out of his left pocket?

Kite. No, no, his right pocket; if it be the left, 'tis none of the man.

But. Well, well, I'll mind him. [*Exit.*

Plume. The right pocket, you say.

[*Behind, with his pocket-book.*

Kite. I hear the rustling of silks. [*Knocking.*] Fly, sir, 'tis Madam Melinda.

Enter MELINDA *and* LUCY.

Kite. Tycho, chairs for the ladies.

Mel. Don't trouble yourself; we sha'n't stay, doctor.

Kite. Your ladyship is to stay much longer than you imagine.

Mel. For what?

Kite. For a husband—For your part, madam, you won't stay for a husband. [*To* LUCY.

Lucy. Pray, doctor, do you converse with the stars or the devil?

Kite. With both: when I have the destinies of men in search, I consult the stars; when the affairs of women come under my hands, I advise with my t'other friend.

Mel. And have you raised the devil upon my account?

Kite. Yes, madam, and he's now under the table.

Lucy. Oh, Heavens protect us! Dear madam! let's be gone.

Kite. If you be afraid of him, why do ye come to consult him?

Mel. Don't fear, fool: do you think, sir, that because I'm a woman I'm to be fool'd out of my reason, or frightened out of my senses? Come, shew me this devil.

Kite. He's a little busy at present, but when he has done he shall wait on you.

Mel. What is he doing?

Kite. Writing your name in his pocket-book.

Mel. Ha, ha! my name! pray what have you or he to do with my name?

Kite. Look'e, fair lady! the devil is a very modest person; he seeks nobody unless they seek him first; he's chain'd up like a mastiff, and cann't stir unless he be let loose.—You come to me to have your fortune told—do you think, madam,

that I can answer you of my own head? No, madam; the affairs of women are so irregular, that nothing less than the devil can give any account of them. Now, to convince you of your incredulity, I'll shew you a trial of my skill. Here, you Cacodemo del Plumo, exert your power; draw me this lady's name, the word Melinda, in proper letters and characters, of her own hand-writing —do it at three motions—one—two—three—'tis done—now, madam, will you please to send your maid to fetch it?

Lucy. I fetch it! the devil fetch me if I do.

Mel. My name in my own hand-writing! that would be convincing indeed.

Kite. Seeing is believing. [*Goes to the table, and lifts up the carpet.*] Here, Tre, Tre, poor Tre, give me the bone, sirrah. There's your name, upon that square piece of paper. Behold——

Mel. 'Tis wonderful! my very letters, to a tittle!

Lucy. 'Tis like your hand, madam, but not so like your hand, neither; and now I look nearer, 'tis not like your hand at all.

Kite. Here's a chambermaid now will outlie the devil!

Lucy. Look'e, madam, they sha'n't impose upon us: people cann't remember their hands no more than they can their faces—Come, madam, let us be certain: write your name upon this paper, then we'll compare the two hands.

[*Takes out a paper, and folds it.*

Kite. Any thing for your satisfaction, madam —Here's pen and ink.

[MELINDA *writes*, LUCY *holds the paper.*

Lucy. Let me see it, madam:—'tis the same ——the very same—But I'll secure one copy for my own affairs. [*Aside.*

Mel. This is demonstration.

Kite. 'Tis so, madam—the word demonstration comes from Dæmon, the father of lies.

Mel. Well, doctor, I'm convinc'd: and now, pray, what account can you give of my future fortune?

Kite. Before the sun has made one course round this earthly globe, your fortune will be fix'd for happiness or misery.

Mel. What! so near the crisis of my fate?

Kite. Let me see—About the hour of ten tomorrow morning you will be saluted by a gentleman who will come to take his leave of you, being designed for travel; his intention of going abroad is sudden, and the occasion a woman. Your fortune and his are like the bullet and the barrel; one runs plump into the other—In short, if the gentleman travels, he will die abroad, and if he does, you will die before he comes home.

Mel. What sort of a man is he?

Kite. Madam, he's a fine gentleman, and a lover; that is, a man of very good sense, and a very great fool.

Mel. How is that possible, doctor?

Kite. Because, madam—because it is so—A woman's reason is the best for a man's being a fool.

Mel. Ten o'clock, you say?

Kite. Ten—about the hour of tea-drinking throughout the kingdom.

Mel. Here, doctor. [*Gives money.*] Lucy, have you any questions to ask?

Lucy. Oh! madam! a thousand.

Kite. I must beg your patience till another time, for I expect more company this minute; besides, I must discharge the gentleman under the table.

Lucy. O! pray, sir, discharge us first!

Kite. Tycho, wait on the ladies down stairs.

[*Exeunt* MELINDA *and* LUCY.

Enter WORTHY *and* PLUME.

Kite. Mr Worthy, you were pleas'd to wish me joy to-day; I hope to be able to return the compliment to-morrow.

Wor. I'll make it the best compliment to you that ever I made in my life, if you do:—but I must be a traveller you say?

Kite. No farther than the Chops of the Channel, I presume, sir.

Plume. That we have concerted already. [*Knocking hard.*] Hey-day! you don't profess midwifery, doctor?

Kite. Away to your ambuscade.

[*Exeunt* WORTHY *and* PLUME.

Enter BRAZEN.

Braz. Your servant, my dear!

Kite. Stand off, I have my familiar already.

Braz. Are you bewitch'd, my dear?

Kite. Yes, my dear! but mine is a peaceable spirit, and hates gunpowder. Thus I fortify myself: [*Draws a circle round him*] and now, captain, have a care how you force my lines.

Braz. Lines! what dost talk of lines! you have something like a fishing-rod there, indeed: but I come to be acquainted with you, man—What's your name, my dear?

Kite. Conundrum.

Braz. Conundrum? rat me! I knew a famous doctor in London of your name—Where were you born?

Kite. I was born in Algebra.

Braz. Algebra! 'tis no country in Christendom, I'm sure, unless it be some place in the Highlands in Scotland.

Kite. Right—I told you I was bewitched.

Braz. So am I, my dear! I am going to be marry'd—I have had two letters from a lady of fortune that loves me to madness, fits, cholic, spleen, and vapours——shall I marry her in four-and-twenty hours, ay or no?

Kite. Certainly.

Braz. Gadso, ay———

Kite. —Or no—but I must have the year and the day of the month when these letters were dated.

Braz. Why, you old bitch! did you ever hear of love-letters dated with the year and day of the month? Do you think billet-doux are like bank-bills?

Kite. They are not so good, my dear!—but if they bear no date, I must examine the contents.

Braz. Contents! that you shall, old boy! here they be both.

Kite. Only the last you received, if you please. [*Takes the letter.*] Now, sir, if you please to let me consult my books for a minute, I'll send this letter inclosed to you, with the determination of the stars upon it, to your lodgings.

Braz. With all my heart—I must give him—[*Puts his hands in his pockets.*] Algebra! I fancy, doctor, 'tis hard to calculate the place of your nativity—Here—[*Gives him money.*] And if I succeed, I'll build a watch-tower on the top of the highest mountain in Wales, for the study of astrology and the benefit of the Conundrums. [*Exit.*

Enter PLUME *and* WORTHY.

Wor. O, doctor! that letter's worth a million; let me see it: and now I have it, I'm afraid to open it.

Plume. Pho! let me see it. [*Opening the letter.*] If she be a jilt—Damn her she is one—there's her name at the bottom on't.

Wor. How! then I'll travel in good earnest—By all my hopes, 'tis Lucy's hand.

Plume. Lucy's!

Wor. Certainly—'tis no more like Melinda's character, than black is to white.

Plume. Then 'tis certainly Lucy's contrivance, to draw in Brazen for a husband—But are you sure 'tis not Melinda's hand?

Wor. You shall see.—Where's the bit of paper I gave you just now, that the devil wrote Melinda upon?

Kite. Here, sir.

Plume. 'Tis plain they are not the same: and is this the malicious name that was subscribed to the letter which made Mr Balance send his daughter into the country?

Wor. The very same. The other fragments I shew'd you just now I once intended for another use; but I think I have turn'd it now to a better advantage.

Plume. But 'twas barbarous to conceal this so long, and to continue me so many hours in the pernicious heresy of believing that angelic creature could change. Poor Sylvia!

Wor. Rich Sylvia, you mean, and poor captain; ha, ha, ha!—Come, come, friend, Melinda is true, and shall be mine; Sylvia is constant, and may be yours.

Plume. No, she's above my hopes——but for her sake, I'll recant my opinion of her sex.

By some the sex is blam'd without design,
Light harmless censure, such as yours and mine,
Sallies of wit, and vapours of our wine:
Others the justice of the sex condemn,
And, wanting merit to create esteem,
Would hide their own defects by censuring them:
But they, secure in their all-conq'ring charms,
Laugh at the vain efforts of false alarms.
He magnifies their conquests who complains;
For none would struggle were they not in chains.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Justice* BALANCE'S *House.*

Enter BALANCE *and* SCALE.

Scale. I say, 'tis not to be borne, Mr Balance.

Bal. Look'e, Mr Scale, for my own part, I shall be very tender in what regards the officers of the army; they expose their lives to so many dangers for us abroad, that we may give them some grains of allowance at home.

Scale. Allowance! this poor girl's father is my tenant, and, if I mistake not, her mother nursed a child for you—shall they debauch our daughters to our faces?

Bal. Consider, Mr Scale, that were it not for the bravery of these officers, we should have French dragoons among us, that would leave us neither liberty, property, wives, nor daughters—Come, Mr Scale, the gentlemen are vigorous and warm, and may they continue so! the same heat that stirs them up to love spurs them on to battle: you never knew a great general in your life that did not love a whore. This I only speak in reference to Captain Plume—for the other spark I know nothing of.

Scale. Nor can I hear of any body that does—Oh! here they come.

Enter SYLVIA, BULLOCK, ROSE, *Prisoners, Constable, and Mob.*

Const. May it please your worships, we took them in the very act, *re infecta*, sir—The gentleman, indeed, behav'd himself like a gentleman, for he drew his sword and swore, and afterwards laid it down and said nothing.

Bal. Give the gentleman his sword again—Wait you without. [*Exeunt Constable and Watch.*] I'm sorry, sir, [*To* SYLVIA] to know a gentleman upon such terms, that the occasion of our meeting should prevent the satisfaction of an acquaintance.

Syl. Sir, you need make no apology for your warrant, no more than I shall do for my behaviour—my innocence is upon an equal foot with your authority.

Scale. Innocence! have you not seduc'd that young maid?

Syl. No, Mr Goosecap, she seduc'd me.

Bul. So she did, I'll swear—for she propos'd marriage first.

Bal. What, then you are marry'd, child? [*To* ROSE.

Rose. Yes, sir, to my sorrow.

Bal. Who was witness?

Bul. That was I—I danc'd, threw the stocking, and spoke jokes by their bed-side, I'm sure.

Bal. Who was the minister?

Bul. Minister! we are soldiers, and want no minister—they were marry'd by the articles of war.

Bal. Hold thy prating, fool——Your appearance, sir, promises some understanding;—pray, what does this fellow mean?

Syl. He means marriage, I think—but that, you know, is so odd a thing, that hardly any two people under the sun agree in the ceremony:—some make it a sacrament, others a convenience, and others make it a jest; but among soldiers 'tis most sacred—our sword you know is our honour, that we lay down—the hero jumps over it first, and the amazon after—Leap rogue, follow whore—the drum beats a ruff, and so to bed: that's all: the ceremony is concise.

Bul. And the prettiest ceremony, so full of pastime and prodigality——

Bal. What! are you a soldier?

Bul. Ay, that I am—Will your worship lend me your cane, and I'll shew you how I can exercise?

Bal. Take it. [*Strikes him over the head.*] Pray, sir, what commission may you bear?

[*To* SYLVIA.

Syl. I'm call'd captain, sir, by all the coffeemen, drawers, whores, and groom-porters in London; for I wear a red coat, a sword, piquet in my head, and dice in my pocket.

Scale. Your name, pray, sir?

Syl. Captain Pinch. I cock my hat with a pinch, I take snuff with a pinch, pay my whores with a pinch; in short, I can do any thing at a pinch, but fight and fill my belly.

Bal. And pray, sir, what brought you into Shropshire?

Syl. A pinch, sir:—I know you country gentlemen want wit, and you know that we town gentlemen want money, and so——

Bal. I understand you, sir—Here, constable——

Enter Constable.

Take this gentleman into custody till further orders.

Rose. Pray your worship don't be uncivil to him, for he did me no hurt; he's the most harmless man in the world, for all he talks so.

Scale. Come, come, child, I'll take care of you.

Syl. What, gentlemen, rob me of my freedom and my wife at once! 'tis the first time they ever went together.

Bal. Hark'e, constable. [*Whispers him.*

Const. It shall be done, sir—Come along, sir.

[*Exeunt Constable,* BULLOCK, *and* SYLVIA.

Bal. Come, Mr Scale, we'll manage the spark presently. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—MELINDA'S *Apartment.*

Enter MELINDA *and* WORTHY.

Mel. So far the prediction is right; 'tis ten exactly. [*Aside.*] And pray, sir, how long have you been in this travelling humour?

Wor. 'Tis natural, madam, for us to avoid what disturbs our quiet.

Mel. Rather the love of change, which is more natural, may be the occasion of it.

Wor. To be sure, madam, there must be charms in variety, else neither you nor I should be so fond of it.

Mel. You mistake, Mr Worthy; I am not so fond of variety as to travel for't, nor do I think it prudence in you to run yourself into a certain expence and danger in hopes of precarious pleasures, which, at best, never answer expectation, as it is evident from the example of most travellers, that long more to return to their own country than they did to go abroad.

Wor. What pleasures I may receive abroad are indeed uncertain; but this I am sure of,—I shall meet with less cruelty among the most barbarous of nations than I have found at home.

Mel. Come, sir, you and I have been jangling a great while; I fancy if we made up our accounts we should the sooner come to an agreement.

Wor. Sure, madam, you won't dispute your being in my debt——My fears, sighs, vows, promises, assiduities, anxieties, jealousies, have run on for a whole year without any payment.

Mel. A year! Oh, Mr Worthy! what you owe to me is not to be paid under a seven years servitude. How did you use me the year before! when, taking the advantage of my innocence and necessity, you would have made me your mistress, that is, your slave—Remember the wicked insinuations, artful baits, deceitful arguments, cunning pretences; then your impudent behaviour, loose expressions, familiar letters, rude visits; remember those, those, Mr Worthy.

Wor. I do remember, and am sorry I made no better use of 'em. [*Aside.*] But you may remember, madam, that——

Mel. Sir, I'll remember nothing—'tis your interest that I should forget. You have been barbarous to me, I have been cruel to you; put that and that together, and let one balance the other—Now, if you will begin upon a new score, lay aside your adventuring airs, and behave yourself handsomely till Lent be over, here's my hand, I'll use you as a gentleman should be.

Wor. And if I don't use you as a gentlewoman should be, may this be my poison.

[*Kissing her hand.*

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, the coach is at the door..

Mel. I am going to Mr Balance's country-house, to see my cousin Sylvia; I have done her an injury, and cann't be easy till I've ask'd her pardon.

Wor. I dare not hope for the honour of waiting on you.

Mel. My coach is full, but if you'll be so gallant as to mount your own horse and follow us, we shall be glad to be overtaken; and if you

bring Captain Plume with you, we sha'n't have the worse reception.

Wor. I'll endeavour it.

[*Exit, leading* MELINDA.

SCENE III.—*The Market-Place.*

Enter PLUME *and* KITE.

Plume. A baker, a tailor, a smith, butchers, carpenters, and journeymen shoemakers, in all thirty-nine—I believe the first colony planted in Virginia had not more trades in their company than I have in mine.

Kite. The butcher, sir, will have his hands full, for we have two sheep-stealers among us—I hear of a fellow too committed just now for stealing of horses.

Plume. We'll dispose of him among the dragoons—Have we never a poulterer among us?

Kite. Yes, sir, the king of the gipsies is a very good one; he has an excellent hand at a goose or a turkey—Here's Captain Brazen, sir.—I must go look after the men.

Enter BRAZEN, *reading a Letter.*

Braz. Um, um, um! the canonical hour——Um, um! very well—My dear Plume! give me a buss.

Plume. Half a score, if you will, my dear! What hast got in thy hand, child?

Braz. 'Tis a project for laying out a thousand pounds.

Plume. Were it not requisite to project first how to get it in?

Braz. You cann't imagine, my dear, that I want twenty thousand pounds; I have spent twenty times as much in the service—Now, my dear! pray advise me—my head runs much upon architecture—shall I build a privateer or a play-house?

Plume. An odd question—a privateer or a play-house! 'twill require some consideration—Faith, I am for a privateer.

Braz. I am not of your opinion, my dear! for, in the first place, a privateer may be ill built.

Plume. And so may a play-house.

Braz. But a privateer may be ill mann'd.

Plume. And so may a play-house.

Braz. A privateer may run upon the shallows.

Plume. Not so often as a play-house.

Braz. But you know a privateer may spring a leak.

Plume. And I know that a play-house may spring a great many.

Braz. But suppose the privateer come home with a rich booty, we should never agree about our shares.

Plume. 'Tis just so in a play-house——So, by my advice, you shall fix upon a privateer.

Braz. Agreed—but if this twenty thousand pounds should not be in specie——

Plume. What twenty thousand?

Braz. Hark'e——— [*Whispers.*

Plume. Marry'd!

Braz. Presently; we're to meet about half a mile out of town, at the water-side—and so forth—[*Reads.*] For fear I should be known by any of Worthy's friends, you must give me leave to wear my mask till after the ceremony, which will make me for ever yours—Look'e there, my dear dog!

[*Shews the bottom of the letter to* PLUME.

Plume. Melinda! and, by this light, her own hand! Once more, if you please, my dear—Her hand exactly—Just now, you say?

Braz. This minute:—I must be gone.

Plume. Have a little patience, and I'll go with you.

Braz. No, no, I see a gentleman coming this way that may be inquisitive; 'tis Worthy; do you know him?

Plume. By sight only.

Braz. Have a care, the very eyes discover secrets. [*Exit.*

Enter WORTHY.

Wor. To boot and saddle, captain; you must mount.

Plume. Whip and spur, Worthy, or you won't mount.

Wor. But I shall:—Melinda and I are agreed; she's gone to visit Sylvia; we are to mount and follow; and could we carry a parson with us, who knows what might be done for us both?

Plume. Don't trouble your head; Melinda has secur'd a parson already.

Wor. Already! do you know more than I?

Plume. Yes, I saw it under her hand—Brazen and she are to meet half a mile hence, at the water-side, there to take boat, I suppose to be ferry'd over to the Elysian fields, if there be any such thing in matrimony.

Wor. I parted with Melinda just now; she assured me she hated Brazen, and that she resolv'd to discard Lucy for daring to write letters to him in her name.

Plume. Nay, nay, there's nothing of Lucy in this—I tell ye I saw Melinda's hand, as surely as this is mine.

Wor. But I tell you she's gone this minute to Justice Balance's country-house.

Plume. But I tell you she's gone this minute to the water-side.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam Melinda has sent word that you need not trouble yourself to follow her, because her journey to Justice Balance's is put off, and she's gone to take the air another way.

[*To* WORTHY.

Wor. How! her journey put off?

Plume. That is, her journey was a put off to you.

Wor. 'Tis plain, plain—But how, where, when is she to meet Brazen?

Plume. Just now, I tell you, half a mile hence, at the water-side.

Wor. Up or down the water?

Plume. That I don't know.

Wor. I'm glad my horses are ready—Jack, get 'em out.

Plume. Shall I go with you?

Wor. Not an inch—I shall return presently. [*Exit.*

Plume. You'll find me at the Hall: the justices are sitting by this time, and I must attend them. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*A Court of Justice.* BALANCE, SCALE, *and* SCRUPLE *upon the Bench; Constable,* KITE, *Mob.*

KITE *and Constable advance.*

Kite. Pray, who are those honourable gentlemen upon the bench?

Const. He in the middle is Justice Balance, he on the right is Justice Scale, and he on the left is Justice Scruple, and I am Mr Constable; four very honest gentlemen.

Kite. O, dear sir! I am your most obedient servant. [*Saluting the Constable.*] I fancy, sir, that your employment and mine are much the same; for my business is to keep people in order, and if they disobey, to knock them down; and then we are both staff-officers.

Const. Nay, I'm a serjeant myself—of the militia—Come, brother, you shall see me exercise. Suppose this a musket; now I'm shouldered.

[*Puts his staff on his right shoulder.*

Kite. Ay, you are shouldered pretty well for a constable's staff, but for a musket, you must put it on the other shoulder, my dear!

Const. Adso! that's true—Come, now give the word of command.

Kite. Silence.

Const Ay, ay, so we will—we will be silent.

Kite. Silence, you dog, silence!

[*Strikes him over the head with his halberd.*

Const. That's the way to silence a man with a witness. What do you mean, friend?

Kite. Only to exercise you, sir.

Const. Your exercise differs so much from ours, that we shall ne'er agree about it: if my own captain had given me such a rap, I had taken the law of him.

Enter PLUME.

Bal. Captain, you are welcome.

Plume. Gentlemen, I thank you.

Scrup. Come, honest captain, sit by me. [PLUME *ascends, and sits upon the bench.*] Now produce your prisoners—Here, that fellow there, set him up. Mr Constable, what have you to say against this man?

Const. I have nothing to say against him, an' please you.

Bal. No! what made you bring him hither?

Const. I don't know, an' please your worship.

Scale. Did not the contents of your warrant direct you what sort of men to take up?

Const. I cann't tell, an' please ye; I cann't read.

Scrup. A very pretty constable, truly.—I find we have no business here.

Kite. May it please the worshipful bench, I desire to be heard in this case, as being the counsel for the king.

Bal. Come, serjeant, you shall be heard, since nobody else will speak; we won't come here for nothing.

Kite. This man is but one man; the country may spare him, and the army wants him: besides, he's cut out by nature for a grenadier; he's five feet ten inches high; he shall box, wrestle, or dance the Cheshire round with any man in the country; he gets drunk every Sabbath-day; and he beats his wife.

Wife. You lie, sirrah, you lie; an' please your worship, he's the best natured, pains-takingest man in the parish; witness my five poor children.

Scrup. A wife and five children! You constable, you rogue, how durst you impress a man that has a wife and five children?

Scale. Discharge him, discharge him.

Bal. Hold, gentlemen.—Hark'e, friend; how do you maintain your wife and five children?

Plume. They live upon wild-fowl and venison, sir: the husband keeps a gun, and kills all the hares and partridges within five miles round.

Bal. A gun! nay, if he be so good at gunning, he shall have enough on't. He may be of use against the French, for he shoots flying, to be sure.

Scrup. But his wife and children, Mr Balance.

Wife. Ay, ay, that's the reason you would send him away: you know I have a child every year, and you are afraid that they should come upon the parish at last.

Plume. Look'e there, gentlemen; the honest woman has spoke it at once: the parish had better maintain five children this year than six or seven the next. That fellow, upon this high feeding, may get you two or three beggars at a birth.

Wife. Look'e, Mr Captain; the parish shall get nothing by sending him away; for I won't lose my teeming-time, if there be a man left in the parish.

Bal. Send that woman to the house of correction——and the man—

Kite. I'll take care of him, if you please.

[*Takes him down.*

Scale. Here, you constable, the next. Set up that black-faced fellow; he has a gunpowder look. What can you say against this man, constable?

Const. Nothing, but that he's a very honest man.

Plume. Pray, gentlemen, let me have one honest man in my company, for the novelty's sake.

Bal. What are you, friend?

Mob. A collier; I work in the coal-pits.

Scrup. Look'e, gentlemen; this fellow has a trade, and the act of parliament here expresses that we are to impress no man that has any visible means of a livelihood.

Kite. May it please your worship, this man has no visible means of a livelihood, for he works under ground.

Plume. Well said, Kite:—besides, the army wants miners.

Bal. Right; and had we an order of government for't, we could raise you, in this and the

neighbouring county of Stafford, five hundred colliers, that would run you under ground like moles, and do more service in a siege than all the miners in the army.

Scrup. Well, friend, what have you to say for yourself?

Mob. I'm married.

Kite. Lack-a-day! so am I.

Mob. Here's my wife, poor woman.

Bal. Are you married, good woman?

Wom. I'm married, in conscience.

Kite. May it please your worship, she's with child, in conscience.

Scale. Who married you, mistress?

Wom. My husband: we agreed that I should call him husband, to avoid passing for a whore, and that he should call me wife, to shun going for a soldier.

Scrup. A very pretty couple!—Pray, captain, will you take them both?

Plume. What say you, Mr Kite? will you take care of the woman?

Kite. Yes, sir, she shall go with us to the seaside, and there if she has a mind to drown herself, we'll take care nobody shall hinder her.

Bal. Here, constable, bring in my man. [*Exit Const.*] Now, captain, I'll fit you with a man such as you never listed in your life.—

Enter Constable and SYLVIA.

Oh, my friend Pinch! I'm very glad to see you.

Syl. Well, sir, and what then?

Scale. What then! is that your respect to the bench?

Syl. Sir, I don't care a farthing for you nor your bench neither.

Scrup. Look'e, gentlemen, that's enough; he's a very impudent fellow, and fit for a soldier.

Scale. A notorious rogue, I say, and very fit for a soldier.

Const. A whore-master, I say, and therefore fit to go.

Bal. What think you, captain?

Plume. I think he is a very pretty fellow, and therefore fit to serve.

Syl. Me for a soldier! send your own lazy, lubberly sons at home; fellows that hazard their necks every day in the pursuit of a fox, yet dare not peep abroad, to look an enemy in the face.

Const. May it please your worships, I have a woman at the door to swear a rape against this rogue.

Syl. Is it your wife or daughter, booby? I ravish'd 'em both yesterday.

Bal. Pray, captain, read the articles of war; we'll see him listed immediately.

Plume. [*Reads.*] Articles of war against mutiny and desertion, &c.

Syl. Hold, sir.——Once more, gentlemen, have a care what you do, for you shall severely smart for any violence you offer to me; and you, Mr Balance, I speak to you particularly, you shall heartily repent it.

Plume. Look'e, young spark, say but one word more, and I'll build a horse for you as high as the cieling, and make you ride the most tiresome journey that ever you made in your life.

Syl. You have made a fine speech, good Captain Huff-cap! but you had better be quiet; I shall find a way to cool your courage.

Plume. Pray, gentlemen, don't mind him; he's distracted.

Syl. 'Tis false: I am descended of as good a family as any in your county; my father is as good a man as any upon your bench; and I am heir to twelve hundred pounds a-year.

Bal. He's certainly mad.—Pray, captain, read the articles of war.

Syl. Hold, once more.—Pray, Mr Balance, to you I speak: suppose I were your child, would you use me at this rate?

Bal. No, faith; were you mine, I would send you to Bedlam first, and into the army afterwards.

Syl. But consider my father, sir: he's as good, as generous, as brave, as just a man as ever serv'd his country; I'm his only child; perhaps the loss of me may break his heart.

Bal. He's a very great fool if it does.—Captain, if you don't list him this minute, I'll leave the court.

Plume. Kite, do you distribute the levy money to the men while I read.

Kite. Ay, sir.—Silence, gentlemen.

[PLUME *reads the articles of war.*

Bal. Very well: now, captain, let me beg the favour of you not to discharge this fellow upon any account whatsoever.—Bring in the rest.

Const. There are no more, an't please your worship.

Bal. No more! there were five two hours ago.

Syl. 'Tis true, sir; but this rogue of a constable let the rest escape for a bribe of eleven shillings a man, because he said the act allowed him but ten, so the odd shilling was clear gains.

All Just. How!

Syl. Gentlemen, he offered to let me go away for two guineas, but I had not so much about me: this is truth, and I'm ready to swear it.

Kite. And I'll swear it: give me the book; 'tis for the good of the service.

Mob. May it please your worship, I gave him half-a-crown to say that I was an honest man; but now, since that your worships have made me a rogue, I hope I shall have my money again.

Bal. 'Tis my opinion that this constable be put into the captain's hands, and if his friends don't bring four good men for his ransom by to-morrow night, captain, you shall carry him to Flanders.

Scale. Scrup. Agreed, agreed.

Plume. Mr Kite, take the constable into custody.

Kite. Ay, ay, sir. [*To the Constable.*] Will you please to have your office taken from you, or will you handsomely lay down your staff, as your betters have done before you?

[*Constable drops his staff.*

Bal. Come, gentlemen, there needs no great ceremony in adjourning this court.—Captain, you shall dine with me.

Kite. Come, Mr Militia Serjeant, I shall silence you now, I believe, without your taking the law of me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*The Fields.*

Enter BRAZEN, *leading in* LUCY, *masked.*

Braz. The boat is just below here.

Enter WORTHY, *with a case of pistols under his arm.*

Wor. Here, sir, take your choice.

[*Going between 'em, and offering them.*

Braz. What! pistols! are they charged, my dear?

Wor. With a brace of bullets each.

Braz. But I'm a foot-officer, my dear! and never use pistols; the sword is my way, and I won't be put out of my road to please any man.

Wor. Nor I neither; so have at you.

[*Cocks one pistol.*

Braz. Look'e, my dear! I don't care for pistols—Pray, oblige me, and let us have a bout at sharps. Damn it! there's no parrying these bullets.

Wor. Sir, if you ha'n't your bellyful of these, the sword shall come in for second course.

Braz. Why, then:—fire and fury! I have eaten smoke from the mouth of a cannon, sir: don't think I fear powder, for I live upon't. Let me see: [*Takes one*] and now, sir, how many paces distance shall we fire?

Wor. Fire when you please; I'll reserve my shot till I am sure of you.

Braz. Come, where's your cloak?

Wor. Cloak! what d'ye mean?

Braz. To fight upon; I always fight upon a cloak; 'tis our way abroad.

Lucy. Come, gentlemen, I'll end the strife.

[*Unmasks.*

Wor. Lucy!—take her.

Braz. The devil take me if I do——Huzza!—[*Fires his pistol.*] D'ye hear, d'ye hear, you plaguy harridan, how those bullets whistle? Suppose they had been lodged in my gizzard?

Lucy. Pray, sir, pardon me.

Braz. I cann't tell, child, till I know whether my money is safe. [*Searching his pockets.*] Yes, yes, I do pardon you; but if I had you at the Rose Tavern, in Covent-Garden, with three or four hearty rakes, and three or four smart napkins, I would tell you another story, my dear! [*Exit.*

Wor. And was Melinda privy to this?

Lucy. No, sir; she wrote her name upon a piece of paper at the fortune-teller's last night, which I put in my pocket, and so writ above it to the captain.

Wor. And how came Melinda's journey put off?

Lucy. At the town's end she met Mr Balance's steward, who told her that Mrs Sylvia was gone from her father's, and nobody could tell whither.

Wor. Sylvia gone from her father's! this will be news to Plume. Go home, and tell your lady how near I was being shot for her. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.—*A Room in* BALANCE'S *House.*

Enter BALANCE *and Steward.*

Stew. We did not miss her till the evening, sir; and then, searching for her in the chamber that was my young master's, we found her clothes there; but the suit that your son left in the press when he went to London was gone.

Bal. The white, trimm'd with silver?

Stew. The same.

Bal. You ha'n't told that circumstance to any body?

Stew. To none but your worship.

Bal. And be sure you don't.—Go into the dining-room, and tell Captain Plume that I beg to speak with him.

Stew. I shall. [*Exit.*

Bal. Was ever man so imposed upon! I had her promise, indeed, that she would never dispose of herself without my consent—I have consented with a witness; given her away as my act and deed—and this, I warrant, the captain thinks will pass. No, I shall never pardon him the villany, first, of robbing me of my daughter, and then the mean opinion he must have of me, to think that I could be so wretchedly imposed upon:—her extravagant passion might encourage her in the attempt, but the contrivance must be his. I'll know the truth presently.—

Enter PLUME.

Pray, captain, what have you done with our young gentleman soldier?

Plume. He's at my quarters, I suppose, with the rest of my men.

Bal. Does he keep company with the common soldiers?

Plume. No, he's generally with me.

Bal. He lies with you, I presume.

Plume. No, faith; I offered him part of my bed—but the young rogue fell in love with Rose, and has lain with her, I think, since she came to town.

Bal. So that, between you both, Rose has been finely manag'd.

Plume. Upon my honour, sir, she had no harm from me.

Bal. All's safe, I find—Now, captain, you must know, that the young fellow's impudence in court was well grounded; he said I should heartily repent his being listed; and so I do from my soul.

Plume. Ay! for what reason?

Bal. Because he is no less than what he said he was; born of as good a family as any in this county, and he is heir to twelve hundred pounds a-year.

Plume. I'm very glad to hear it; for I wanted

but a man of that quality to make my company a perfect representative of the whole commons of England.

Bal. Won't you discharge him?

Plume. Not under a hundred pounds sterling.

Bal. You shall have it; for his father is my intimate friend.

Plume. Then you shall have him for nothing.

Bal. Nay, sir, you shall have your price.

Plume. Not a penny, sir; I value an obligation to you much above an hundred pounds.

Bal. Perhaps, sir, you sha'n't repent your generosity—Will you please to write his discharge in my pocket-book? [*Gives his book.*] In the mean time, we'll send for the gentleman.—Who waits there?—

Enter a Servant.

Go to the captain's lodging, and inquire for Mr Wilful; tell him his captain wants him here immediately.

Serv. Sir, the gentleman's below at the oor, inquiring for the captain.

Plume. Bid him come up.—Here's the discharge, sir.

Bal. Sir, I thank you—'Tis plain he had no hand in't. [*Aside.*

Enter SYLVIA.

Syl. I think, captain, you might have used me better than to leave me yonder among your swearing, drunken crew; and you, Mr Justice, might have been so civil as to have invited me to dinner; for I have eaten with as good a man as your worship.

Plume. Sir, you must charge our want of respect upon our ignorance of your quality—but now you are at liberty—I have discharg'd you.

Syl. Discharg'd me!

Bal. Yes, sir, and you must once more go home to your father.

Syl. My father! then I'm discovered——Oh, sir! [*Kneeling.*] I expect no pardon.

Bal. Pardon! no, no, child; your crime shall be your punishment:—here, captain, I deliver her over to the conjugal power for her chastisement. Since she will be a wife, be you a husband, a very husband—When she tells you of her love, upbraid her with her folly; be modishly ungrateful, because she has been unfashionably kind; and use her worse than you would any body else, because you cann't use her so well as she deserves.

Plume. And are you Sylvia, in good earnest?

Syl. Earnest! I have gone too far to make it a jest, sir.

Plume. And do you give her to me in good earnest?

Bal. If you please to take her, sir.

Plume. Why, then, I have saved my legs and arms, and lost my liberty; secure from wounds, I am prepared for the gout:—farewell subsistence, and welcome taxes—Sir, my liberty and the hope of being a general are much dearer to me than your twelve hundred pounds a-year—but to your love, madam, I resign my freedom, and to your beauty my ambition—greater in obeying at your feet than commanding at the head of an army.

Enter WORTHY.

Wor. I am sorry to hear, Mr Balance, that your daughter is lost.

Bal. So am not I, sir, since an honest gentleman has found her.

Enter MELINDA.

Mel. Pray, Mr Balance, what's become of my cousin Sylvia?

Bal. Your cousin Sylvia is talking yonder with your cousin Plume.

Mel. And Worthy!—How!

Syl. Do you think it strange, cousin, that a woman should change? But I hope you'll excuse a change that has proceeded from constancy: I altered my outside because I was the same within, and only laid by the woman to make sure of my man: that's my history.

Mel. Your history is a little romantic, cousin; but since success has crowned your adventures, you will have the world on your side, and I shall be willing to go with the tide, provided you'll pardon an injury I offered you in the letter to your father.

Plume. That injury, madam, was done to me, and the reparation I expect shall be made to my friend:—make Mr Worthy happy, and I shall be satisfied.

Mel. A good example, sir, will go a great way—When my cousin is pleased to surrender, 'tis probable I sha'n't hold out much longer.

Enter BRAZEN.

Braz. Gentlemen, I am yours—Madam, I am not yours.

Mel. I'm glad on't, sir.

Braz. So am I—You have got a pretty house here, Mr Laconic.

Bal. 'Tis time to right all mistakes.—My name, sir, is Balance.

Braz. Balance! Sir, I am your most obedient—I know your whole generation—Had not you an uncle that was governor of the Leeward Islands some years ago?

Bal. Did you know him?

Braz. Intimately, sir—He played at billiards to a miracle—You had a brother, too, that was a captain of a fire-ship.—Poor Dick—he had the most engaging way with him of making punch—and then his cabin was so neat—but his poor boy Jack was the most comical bastard—ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! a pickled dog; I shall never forget him.

Plume. Well, captain, are you fixed in your project yet? are you still for the privateer?

Braz. No, no—I had enough of a privateer just now; I had like to have been picked up by a cruiser under false colours, and a French pickaroon, for aught I know.

Plume. Have you got your recruits, my dear?
Braz. Not a stick, my dear!
Plume. Probably I shall furnish you.

Enter ROSE *and* BULLOCK.

Rose. Captain, captain, I have got loose once more, and have persuaded my sweetheart Cartwheel to go with us; but you must promise not to part with me again.

Syl. I find Mrs Rose has not been pleased with her bed-fellow.

Rose. Bed-fellow! I don't know whether I had a bed-fellow or not.

Syl. Don't be in a passion, child; I was as little pleas'd with your company as you could be with mine.

Bul. Pray, sir, donna be offended at my sister; she's something under-bred; but if you please I'll lie with you in her stead.

Plume, I have promised, madam, to provide for this girl: now, will you be pleased to let her wait upon you, or shall I take care of her?

Syl. She shall be my charge, sir; you may find it business enough to take care of me.

Bul. Ay, and of me, captain; for, wauns! if ever you lift your hand against me, I'll desert—

Plume. Captain Brazen shall take care o' that. My dear! instead of the twenty thousand pounds you talked of, you shall have the twenty brave recruits that I have raised, at the rate they cost me—My commission I lay down, to be taken up by some braver fellow, that has more merit, and less good fortune—whilst I endeavour, by the example of this worthy gentleman, to serve my king and country at home.

With some regret I quit the active field,
Where glory full reward for life does yield;
But the recruiting trade, with all its train
Of endless plague, fatigue, and endless pain,
I gladly quit, with my fair spouse to stay,
And raise recruits the matrimonial way.

[*Excunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

ALL ladies and gentlemen that are willing to see the Comedy called The Recruiting Officer, let them repair, to-morrow night, by six o'clock, to the sign of the Theatre Royal, in Drury-Lane, and they shall be kindly entertained.—

We scorn the vulgar ways to bid you come;
Whole Europe now obeys the call of drum.
The soldier, not the poet, here appears,
And beats up for a corps of volunteers;
He finds that music chiefly does delight ye,
And therefore chooses music to invite ye.

Beat the Grenadiers' March——Row, tow, row——Gentlemen, this piece of music, call'd an Overture to a Battle, was composed by a famous Italian master, and was perform'd, with wonderful success, at the great operas of Vigo, Schellenbergh, and Blenheim: it came off with the applause of all Europe, excepting France; the French found it a little too rough for their delicatesse.

Some that have acted on those glorious stages
Are here, to witness to succeeding ages,
No music like the grenadiers' engages.

Ladies, we must own that this music of ours is not altogether so soft as Bonancini's; yet we dare affirm that it has laid more people asleep than all the Camillas in the world; and you'll condescend to own that it keeps one awake better than any opera that ever was acted.

The Grenadiers' March seems to be a composure excellently adapted to the genius of the English; or no music was ever follow'd so far by us, nor with so much alacrity: and, with all deference to the present subscription, we must say, that the Grenadiers' March has been subscrib'd for by the whole grand alliance; and we presume to inform the ladies, that it always has the preeminence abroad, and is constantly heard by the tallest, handsomest men in the whole army. In short, to gratify the present taste, our author is now adapting some words to the Grenadiers' March, which he intends to have perform'd tomorrow, if the lady who is to sing it should not happen to be sick.

This he concludes to be the surest way
To draw you hither; for you'll all obey
Soft music's call, tho' you should damn his play.

THE

BEAUX STRATAGEM.

BY

FARQUHAR.

PROLOGUE.

When strife disturbs, or sloth corrupts an age,
Keen satire is the business of the stage.
When the Plain Dealer writ, he lash'd those crimes
Which then infested most——the modish times:
But now, when faction sleeps, and sloth is fled,
And all our youth in active fields are bred;
When thro' Great Britain's fair, extensive round,
The trumps of Fame the notes of Union sound;
When Anna's sceptre points the laws their course,
And her example gives her precepts force,—
There scarce is room for satire; all our lays
Must be, or songs of triumph, or of praise.

But as, in grounds best cultivated, tares
And poppies rise among the golden ears;
Our product so, fit for the field or school,
Must mix with Nature's favourite plant—a fool:
A weed that has to twenty summers ran,
Shoots up in stalk, and vegetates to man.
Simpling, our author goes from field to field,
And culls such fools as may diversion yield:
And, thanks to nature, there's no want of those,
For rain or shine the thriving coxcomb grows.
Follies to-night we shew ne'er lash'd before,
Yet such as Nature shews you ev'ry hour:
Nor can the picture give a just offence,
For fools are made for jests to men of sense.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

AIMWELL, } *two Gentlemen of broken fortunes.*
ARCHER, }
SULLEN, *a country Blockhead.*
Sir C. FREEMAN, *a Gentleman from London.*
FOIGARD, *a French Priest.*
GIBBET, *a Highwayman.*
HOUNSLOW, } *his Companions.*
BAGSHOT, }
BONIFACE, *Landlord of the Inn.*
SCRUB, *Servant to Mr Sullen.*

WOMEN.

Lady BOUNTIFUL, *an old, civil, country Gent woman, that cures all distempers.*
DORINDA, *Lady Bountiful's Daughter.*
Mrs SULLEN, *her Daughter-in-law.*
GIPSY.
CHERRY.

SCENE,—*Litchfield.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An Inn.*

Enter BONIFACE, *running.*

[*Bar bell rings.*

Bon. Chamberlain, maid, Cherry, daughter Cherry! All asleep, all dead?

Enter CHERRY, *running.*

Cher. Here, here.—Why d'ye bawl so, father? D'ye think we have no ears?

Bon. You deserve to have none, you young minx—the company of the Warrington coach has stood in the hall this hour, and nobody to shew them to their chambers.

Cher. And let 'em wait, father; there's neither red-coat in the coach, nor footman behind it.

Bon. But they threaten to go to another inn to-night.

Cher. That they dare not, for fear the coachman should overturn them to-morrow. [*Ringing.*] Coming, coming.—Here's the London coach arriv'd.

Enter several People, with trunks, band-boxes, with other luggage, and cross the stage.

Bon. Welcome, ladies.

Cher. Very welcome, gentlemen.—Chamberlain, shew the Lion and the Rose.

[*Exit with the company.*

Enter AIMWELL, *in a riding habit;* ARCHER, *as footman, carrying a portmanteau.*

Bon. This way, this way, gentlemen.

Aim. Set down the things; go to the stable, and see my horse well rubb'd. [*Exit.*

Arch. I shall, sir.

Aim. You're my landlord, I suppose?

Bon. Yes, sir; I'm old Will Boniface, pretty well known upon this road, as the saying is.

Aim. O, Mr Boniface, your servant.

Bon. O, sir——What will your honour please to drink, as the saying is?

Aim. I have heard your town of Litchfield much fam'd for ale: I think I'll taste that.

Bon. Sir, I have now in my cellar ten tun of the best ale in Staffordshire; 'tis smooth as oil, sweet as milk, clear as amber, and strong as brandy, and will be just fourteen years old the fifth day of March next, old style.

Aim. You're very exact, I find, in the age of your ale.

Bon. As punctual, sir, as I am in the age of my children:—I'll shew you such ale.——Here, tapster, broach number 1706, as the saying is.——Sir, you shall taste my anno Domini——I have liv'd in Litchfield, man and boy, above eight-and-fifty years, and, I believe, have not consumed eight-and-fifty ounces of meat.

Aim. At a meal, you mean, if one may guess your sense by your bulk.

Bon. Not in my life, sir: I have fed purely upon ale: I have eat my ale, drank my ale, and I always sleep upon ale.—

Enter Tapster, with a tankard.

Now, sir, you shall see. [*Filling it out.*] Your worship's health. Ha! delicious, delicious——fancy it Burgundy, only fancy it, and 'tis worth ten shillings a quart.

Aim. [*Drinks.*] 'Tis confounded strong.

Bon. Strong! It must be so, or how would we be strong that drink it?

Aim. And have you liv'd so long upon this ale, landlord?

Bon. Eight-and-fifty years, upon my credit, sir; but it kill'd my wife, poor woman! as the saying is.

Aim. How came that to pass?

Bon. I don't know how, sir: she would not let the ale take its natural course, sir; she was for qualifying it every now and then with a dram, as the saying is; and an honest gentleman that came this way from Ireland made her a present of a dozen bottles of usquebaugh——but the poor woman was never well after;—but, however, I was obliged to the gentleman, you know.

Aim. Why, was it the usquebaugh that killed her?

Bon. My lady Bountiful said so——she, good lady, did what could be done; she cur'd her of three tympanies, but the fourth carried her off; but she's happy, and I am contented, as the saying is.

Aim. Who's that Lady Bountiful you mentioned?

Bon. Ods my life, sir, we'll drink her health. [*Drinks.*] My lady Bountiful is one of the best of women: her last husband, Sir Charles Bountiful, left her worth a thousand pounds a-year; and, I believe, she lays out one half on't in charitable uses, for the good of her neighbours: she cures rheumatisms, ruptures, and broken shins in men; green sickness, obstructions, and fits of the mother in women; the king's evil, chin-cough, and chilblains in children: in short, she has cured more people, in and about Litchfield, within ten years, than the doctors have kill'd in twenty; and that's a bold word.

Aim. Has the lady been any other way useful in her generation?

Bon. Yes, sir, she has a daughter, by Sir Charles, the finest woman in all our country, and the greatest fortune: she has a son, too, by her first husband, 'Squire Sullen, who married a fine lady from London t'other day: if you please, sir, we'll drink his health.

Aim. What sort of a man is he?

Bon. Why, sir, the man's well enough; says little, thinks less, and does—nothing at all, faith; but he's a man of great estate, and values nobody.

Aim. A sportsman, I suppose?

Bon. Yes, sir, he's a man of pleasure: he plays at whist, and smokes his pipe eight-and-forty hours together sometimes.

Aim. A fine sportsman, truly! and married, you say?

Bon. Ay, and to a curious woman, sir.—But he's a—He wants it here, sir. [*Pointing to his forehead.*

Aim. He has it there, you mean.

Bon. That's none of my business; he's my landlord; and so a man, you know, would not—But, I'cod, he's no better than——sir, my humble service to you. [*Drinks.*] Though I value not a farthing what he can do to me: I pay him his rent at quarter-day; I have a good running trade; I have but one daughter, and I can give her—But no matter for that.

Aim. You're very happy, Mr Boniface.—Pray, what other company have you in town?

Bon. A power of fine ladies; and then we have the French officers.

Aim. O! that's right; you have a good many of those gentlemen: pray, how do you like their company?

Bon. So well, as the saying is, that I could wish we had as many more of 'em: they're full of money, and pay double for every thing they have; they know, sir, that we paid good round taxes for the taking of them, and so they are willing to reimburse us a little:—one of 'em lodges in my house.

Enter ARCHER.

Arch. Landlord, there are some French gentlemen below, that ask for you.

Bon. I'll wait on 'em——Does your master stay long in town, as the saying is? [*To* ARCHER.

Arch. I cann't tell, as the saying is.

Bon. Come from London?

Arch. No.

Bon. Going to London, may-hap.

Arch. No.

Bon. An odd fellow this! [*Bar bell rings.*] I beg your worship's pardon; I'll wait on you in half a minute. [*Exit.*

Aim. The course is clear, I see——Now, my dear Archer, welcome to Litchfield.

Arch. I thank thee, my dear brother in iniquity.

Aim. Iniquity! pr'ythee leave canting; you need not change your style with your dress.

Arch. Don't mistake me, Aimwell; for 'tis still my maxim, that there's no scandal like rags, nor any crime so shameful as poverty. Men must not be poor: idleness is the root of all evil: the world's wide enough; let 'em bustle: fortune has taken the weak under her protection, but men of sense are left to their industry.

Aim. Upon which topic we proceed, and, I think, luckily, hitherto. Would not any man swear, now, that I am a man of quality, and you my servant, when, if our intrinsic value were known——

Arch. Come, come, we are the men of intrinsic value, who can strike our fortunes out of ourselves; whose worth is independent of accidents in life, or revolutions in government: we have heads to get money, and hearts to spend it.

Aim. As to our hearts, I grant ye they are as willing tits as any within twenty degrees; but I can have no great opinion of our heads from the service they have done us hitherto, unless it be that they brought us from London hither to Litchfield, made me a lord, and you my servant.

Arch. That's more than you could expect already.—But what money have we left?

Aim. But two hundred pounds.

Arch. And our horses, clothes, rings, &c. Why, we have very good fortunes now, for moderate people: and let me tell you, that this two hundred pounds, with the experience that we are now masters of, is a better estate than the ten thousand we have spent. Our friends, indeed, began to suspect that our pockets were low, but we came off with flying colours, shewed no signs of want, either in word or deed.

Aim. Ay, and our going to Brussels was a good pretence enough for our sudden disappearing; and, I warrant you, our friends imagine that we are gone a volunteering.

Arch. Why, 'faith, if this project fails, it must e'en come to that. I am for venturing one of the hundreds, if you will, upon this knight-erran-try; but in case it should fail, we'll reserve the other to carry us to some counterscarp, where we may die as we liv'd,—in a blaze.

Aim. With all my heart; and we have liv'd justly, Archer; we cann't say that we have spent our fortunes, but that we have enjoy'd 'em.

Arch. Right: so much pleasure for so much money: we have had our pennyworths; and had I millions, I would go to the same market again. O London, London! Well, we have had our share, and let us be thankful: past pleasures, for aught I know, are best, such as we are sure of; those to come may disappoint us. But you command for the day, and so I submit.—At Nottingham, you know, I am to be master.

Aim. And at Lincoln I again.

Arch. Then, at Norwich I mount, which, I think, shall be our last stage; for if we fail there, we'll embark for Holland, bid adieu to Venus, and welcome Mars.

Aim. A match!

Enter BONIFACE.

Mum.

Bon. What will your worship please to have for supper?

Aim. What have you got?

Bon. Sir, we have a delicate piece of beef in the pot, and a pig at the fire.

Aim. Good supper-meat, I must confess—— I cann't eat beef, landlord.

Arch. And I hate pig.

Aim. Hold your prating, sirrah! Do you know who you are? [*Aside.*

Bon. Please to bespeak something else: I have every thing in the house.

Aim. Have you any veal?

Bon. Veal! sir; we had a delicate loin of veal on Wednesday last.

Aim. Have you got any fish, or wild-fowl?

Bon. As for fish, truly, sir, we are an inland town, and indifferently provided with fish, that's the truth on't; but then for wild-fowl!——we have a delicate couple of rabbits.

Aim. Get me the rabbits fricasseed.

Bon. Fricasseed! Lard, sir, they'll eat much better smother'd with onions.

Arch. Pshaw! Rot your onions.

Aim. Again, sirrah!—Well, landlord, what you please: but hold, I have a small charge of money, and your house is so full of strangers, that I believe it may be safer in your custody than mine; for when this fellow of mine gets drunk, he minds nothing—Here, sirrah, reach me the strong box.

Arch. Yes, sir——this will give us reputation. [*Aside. Brings the box.*

Aim. Here, landlord; the locks are sealed down, both for your security and mine: it holds somewhat above two hundred pounds; if you doubt it, I'll count them to you after supper: but be sure you lay it where I may have it at a minute's warning; for my affairs are a little dubious at present: perhaps I may be gone in half an hour; perhaps I may be your guest till the best part of that be spent:—and, pray, order your ostler to keep my horses ready saddled:—but one thing, above the rest, I must beg,—that you will let this fellow have none of your anno Domini, as you call it; for he's the most insufferable sot.—Here, sirrah, light me to my chamber.

Arch. Yes, sir. [*Exit, lighted by* ARCHER.

Bon. Cherry, daughter Cherry!

Enter CHERRY.

Cher. D'ye call, father?

Bon. Ay, child:—you must lay by this box for the gentleman; 'tis full of money.

Cher. Money! is all that money? Why, sure, father, the gentleman comes to be chosen parliament-man. Who is he?

Bon. I don't know what to make of him: he talks of keeping his horses ready saddled, and of going, perhaps, at a minute's warning, or of staying, perhaps, till the best part of this be spent.

Cher. Ay! ten to one, father, he's a highwayman.

Bon. A highwayman! Upon my life, girl, you have hit it, and this box is some new purchased booty.—Now, could we find him out, the money were ours.

Cher. He don't belong to our gang.

Bon. What horses have they?

Cher. The master rides upon a black.

Bon. A black! ten to one the man upon the black mare; and since he don't belong to our fraternity, we may betray him with a safe conscience. I don't think it lawful to harbour any rogues but my own. Look'e, child, as the saying is, we must go cunningly to work: proofs we must have:—the gentleman's servant loves drink; I'll ply him that way; and ten to one he loves a wench; you must work him t'other way.

Cher. Father, would you have me give my secret for his?

Bon. Consider, child, there's two hundred pounds to boot. [*Ringing without.*] Coming, coming—— Child, mind your business. [*Exit* BON.

Cher. What a rogue is my father!—My father! I deny it—My mother was a good, generous, free-hearted woman, and I cann't tell how far her good nature might have extended for the good of her children. This landlord of mine, for I think I can call him no more, would betray his guest, and debauch his daughter into the bargain——by a footman too!

Enter ARCHER.

Arch. What footman, pray, mistress, is so happy as to be the subject of your contemplation?

Cher. Whoever he is, friend, he'll be but little the better for't.

Arch. I hope so; for I'm sure you did not think of me.

Cher. Suppose I had!

Arch. Why, then, you're but even with me; for the minute I came in, I was considering in what manner I should make love to you.

Cher. Love to me, friend!

Arch. Yes, child.

Cher. Child! Manners!—if you keep a little more distance, friend, it would become you much better.

Arch. Distance! Good night, sauce-box. [*Going.*

Cher. A pretty fellow! I like his pride—Sir; pray, sir; you see, sir, [ARCH. *returns*] I have the credit to be trusted with your master's fortune here, which sets me a degree above his footman. —I hope, sir, you a'n't affronted.

Arch. Let me look you full in the face, and I'll tell you whether you can affront me or no——'Sdeath! child, you have a pair of delicate eyes, and you don't know what to do with 'em.

Cher. Why, sir, don't I see every body?

Arch. Ay, but if some women had them, they would kill every body.——Pr'ythee instruct me; I would fain make love to you, but I don't know what to say.

Cher Why, did you never make love to any body before?

Arch. Never to a person of your figure, I can assure you, madam; my addresses have always been confined to persons within my own sphere; I never aspir'd so high before. [ARCHER *sings.*

But you look so bright,
And are dress'd so tight,
That a man would swear you're right,
As arm was e'er laid over.
Such an air
You freely wear,
To ensnare,
As makes each guest a lover.
Since, then, my dear, I'm your guest,
Pr'ythee give me of the best
Of what is ready dress'd.
Since, then, my dear, &c.

Cher. What can I think of this man? [*Aside.* Will you give me that song, sir?

Arch. Ay, my dear, take it while it is warm. [*Kisses her.*] Death and fire! her lips are honeycombs.

Cher. And I wish there had been a swarm of bees too, to have stung you for your impudence.

Arch. There's a swarm of Cupids, my little Venus, that has done the business much better.

Cher. This fellow is misbegotten, as well as I. [*Aside.*] What's your name, sir?

Arch. Name! 'Egad, I have forgot it. [*Aside.*] Oh! Martin.

Cher. Where was you born?

Arch. In St Martin's parish.

Cher. What was your father?

Arch. Of——of——St Martin's parish.

Cher. Then, friend, good night.

Arch. I hope not.

Cher. You may depend upon't.

Arch. Upon what?

Cher. That you're very impudent.

Arch. That you're very handsome.

Cher. That you're a footman.

Arch. That you're an angel.

Cher. I shall be rude.

Arch. So shall I.

Cher. Let go my hand.

Arch. Give me a kiss. [*Kisses her.*

[BONIFACE *calls without,—Cherry, Cherry!*

Cher. I'm———My father calls!—You plaguy devil, how durst you stop my breath so?—Offer to follow me one step, if you dare. [*Exit.*

Arch. A fair challenge, by this light: this is a pretty fair opening of an adventure; but we are knight-errants, and so fortune be our guide. [*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Gallery in Lady* BOUNTIFUL'S *House.*

Mrs SULLEN *and* DORINDA, *meeting.*

Dor. Morrow, my dear sister; are you for church this morning?

Mrs Sul. Any where to pray; for heaven alone can help me: but I think, Dorinda, there's no form of prayer in the liturgy against bad husbands.

Dor. But there's a form of law at Doctor's Commons; and I swear, sister Sullen, rather than see you thus continually discontented, I would advise you to apply to that; for besides the part that I bear in your vexatious broils, as being sister to the husband, and friend to the wife, your examples give me such an impression of matrimony, that I shall be apt to condemn my person to a long vacation all its life. But supposing, madam, that you brought it to a case of separation, what can you urge against your husband? My brother is, first, the most constant man alive.

Mrs Sul. The most constant husband, I grant ye.—

Dor. He never sleeps from you.

Mrs Sul. No, he always sleeps with me.

Dor. He allows you a maintenance suitable to your quality.

Mrs Sul. A maintenance! Do you take me, madam, for an hospital child, that I must sit down and bless my benefactors for meat, drink, and clothes? As I take it, madam, I brought your brother ten thousand pounds, out of which I might expect some pretty things, called pleasures.

Dor. You share in all the pleasures the country affords.

Mrs Sul. Country pleasures! Racks and torments! Dost think, child, that my limbs were made for leaping of ditches, and clambering over stiles; or that my parents, wisely foreseeing my future happiness in country pleasures had early instructed me in rural accomplishments, of drinking fat ale, playing at whist, and smoking tobacco with my husband; or of spreading of plasters, brewing of diet-drinks, and 'stilling rosemary-water, with the good old gentlewoman my mother-in-law?

Dor. I'm sorry, madam, that it is not more in our power to divert you: I could wish, indeed, that our entertainments were a little more polite, or your taste a little less refined: but pray, madam, how came the poets and philosophers, that laboured so much in hunting after pleasure, to place it at last in a country life?

Mrs Sul. Because they wanted money, child, to find out the pleasures of the town. Did you ever hear of a poet or philosopher worth ten thousand pounds? If you can shew me such a man, I'll lay you fifty pounds, you'll find him somewhere within the weekly bills. Not that I disapprove rural pleasures, as the poets have painted them in their landscapes:—every Phyllis has her Corydon; every murmuring stream and every flowery mead gives fresh alarm to love: Besides, you'll find that their couples were never married.—But yonder I see my Corydon; and a sweet swain it is, Heaven knows! Come, Dorinda, don't be angry; he's my husband, and your brother, and, between both, is he not a sad brute?

Dor. I have nothing to say to your part of him; you're the best judge.

Mrs Sul. O, sister, sister! if ever you marry, beware of a sullen, silent sot; one that's always musing, but never thinks. There's some diversion in a talking blockhead; and since a woman must wear chains, I would have the pleasure of hearing 'em rattle a little. Now you shall see:—but take this by the way:—he came home this morning at his usual hour of four, wakened me out of a sweet dream of something else, by tumbling over the tea-table, which he broke all to pieces. After his man and he had rolled about the room, like sick passengers in a storm, he comes flounce into bed, dead as a salmon into a fishmonger's basket; his feet cold as ice; his breath hot as a furnace; and his hands and his face

greasy as his flannel night-cap——Oh! matrimony, matrimony!——He tosses up the clothes, with a barbarous swing, over his shoulders, disorders the whole economy of my bed, leaves me half-naked, and my whole night's comfort is the tuneable serenade of that wakeful nightingale his nose. ——O! the pleasure of counting a melancholy clock by a snoring husband!——But now, sister, you shall see how handsomely, being a well-bred man, he will beg my pardon.

Enter SULLEN.

Sul. My head aches consumedly.

Mrs Sul. Will you be pleased, my dear, to drink tea with us this morning; it may do your head good?

Sul. No.

Dor. Coffee, brother?

Sul. Pshaw!

Mrs Sul. Will you please to dress, and go to church with me? the air may help you.

Sul. Scrub!

Enter SCRUB.

Scrub. Sir!

Sul. What day of the week is this?

Scrub. Sunday, an't please your worship.

Sul. Sunday!—Bring me a dram; and, d'ye hear, set out the venison-pasty and a tankard of strong beer upon the hall-table; I'll go to breakfast.

[*Going.*

Dor. Stay, stay, brother; you sha'n't get off so; you were very naughty last night, and must make your wife reparation. Come, come, brother; won't you ask pardon?

Sul. For what?

Dor. For being drunk last night.

Sul. I can afford it, cann't I?

Mrs Sul. But I cann't, sir.

Sul. Then you may let it alone.

Mrs Sul. But I must tell you, sir, that this is not to be borne.

Sul. I'm glad on't.

Mrs Sul. What is the reason, sir, that you use me thus inhumanly?

Sul. Scrub!

Scrub. Sir!

Sul. Get things ready to shave my head.

[*Exit.*

Mrs Sul. Have a care of coming near his temples, Scrub, for fear you meet something there that may turn the edge of your razor. [*Exit* SCRUB.] Inveterate stupidity! Did you ever know so hard, so obstinate a spleen as his? O, sister, sister! I shall never have any good of the beast till I get him to town: London, dear London, is the place for managing and breaking a husband.

Dor. And has not a husband the same opportunities there for humbling a wife?

Mrs Sul. No, no, child; 'tis a standing maxim in conjugal discipline, that when a man would enslave his wife, he hurries her into the country; and when a lady would be arbitrary with her husband, she wheedles her booby up to town. A man dare not play the tyrant in London, because there are so many examples to encourage the subject to rebel. O, Dorinda, Dorinda! a fine woman may do any thing in London. O' my conscience, she may raise an army of forty thousand men.

Dor. I fancy, sister, you have a mind to be trying your power that way here in Litchfield; you have drawn the French count to your colours already.

Mrs Sul. The French are a people that cann't live without their gallantries.

Dor. And some English, that I know, sister, are not averse to such amusements.

Mrs Sul. Well, sister, since the truth must out, it may do as well now as hereafter: I think one way to rouse my lethargic, sottish husband, is to give him a rival: security begets negligence in all people; and men must be alarmed to make 'em alert in their duty: women are, like pictures, of no value in the hands of a fool, till he hears men of sense bid high for the purchase.

Dor. This might do, sister, if my brother's understanding were to be convinced into a passion for you; but, I believe, there's a natural aversion on his side; and I fancy, sister, that you don't come much behind him, if you dealt fairly.

Mrs Sul. I own it: we are united contradictions,—fire and water. But I could be contented, with a great many other wives, to humour the censorious vulgar, and give the world an appearance of living well with my husband, could I bring him but to dissemble a little kindness, to keep me in countenance.

Dor. But how do you know, sister, but that, instead of rousing your husband, by this artifice, to a counterfeit kindness, he should awake in a real fury?

Mrs Sul. Let him.——If I cann't entice him to the one, I would provoke him to the other.

Dor. But how must I behave myself between ye?

Mrs Sul. You must assist me.

Dor. What! against my own brother?

Mrs Sul. He's but half a brother, and I'm your entire friend. If I go a step beyond the bounds of honour, leave me; till then, I expect you should go along with me in every thing. —The count is to dine here to-day.

Dor. 'Tis a strange thing, sister, that I cann't like that man.

Mrs Sul. You like nothing; your time is not come. Love and death have their fatalities, and strike home one time or other. You'll pay for all one day, I warrant ye.—But come, my lady's tea is ready, and 'tis almost church-time.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Inn.*

Enter AIMWELL, *dressed, and* ARCHER.

Aim. And was she the daughter of the house?

Arch. The landlord is so blind as to think so; but I dare swear she has better blood in her veins.

Aim. Why dost think so?

Arch. Because the baggage has a pert *je ne sçai quoi*; she reads plays, keeps a monkey, and is troubled with vapours.

Aim. By which discoveries I guess that you know more of her.

Arch. Not yet, faith. The lady gives herself airs, forsooth:—nothing under a gentleman.

Aim. Let me take her in hand.

Arch. Say one word more o' that, and I'll declare myself, spoil your sport there, and every where else.—Look ye, Aimwell, every man in his own sphere.

Aim. Right, and therefore you must pimp for your master.

Arch. In the usual forms, good sir; after I have served myself.—But to our business. You are so well dress'd, Tom, and make so handsome a figure, that I fancy you may do execution in a country church: the exterior part strikes first, and you're in the right to make that impression favourable.

Aim. There's something in that which may turn to advantage. The appearance of a stranger in a country church draws as many gazers as a blazing star:—no sooner he comes into the cathedral, but a train of whispers runs buzzing round the congregation in a moment.——Who is he? Whence comes he? Do you know him?—Then I, sir, tips me the verger half-a-crown; he pockets the simony, and inducts me into the best pew in the church: I pull out my snuff-box, turn myself round, bow to the bishop, or the dean, if he be the commanding-officer, single out a beauty, rivet both my eyes to hers, set my nose a-bleeding by the strength of imagination, and shew the whole church my concern, by my endeavouring to hide it:—after the sermon, the whole town gives me to her for a lover, and, by persuading the lady that I am dying for her, the tables are turned, and she, in good earnest, falls in love with me.

Arch. There's nothing in this, Tom, without a precedent: but instead of rivetting your eyes to a beauty, try to fix them upon a fortune; that's our business at present.

Aim. Pshaw! no woman can be a beauty without a fortune.—Let me alone for a marksman.

Arch. Tom!

Aim. Ay!

Arch. When were you at church before, pray?

Aim. Um.—I was there at the coronation.

Arch. And how can you expect a blessing by going to church now?

Aim. Blessing! Nay, Frank, I ask but for a wife. [*Exit.*

Arch. Truly, the man is not very unreasonable in his demands. [*Exit, at the opposite door.*

Enter BONIFACE *and* CHERRY.

Bon. Well, daughter, as the saying is, have you brought Martin to confess?

Cher. Pray, father, don't put me upon getting any thing out of a man; I'm but young, you know, father, and don't understand wheedling.

Bon. Young! Why, you jade, as the saying is, can any woman wheedle that is not young? Your mother was useless at five-and-twenty. Would you make your mother a whore, and me a cuckold, as the saying is? I tell you, his silence confesses it, and his master spends his money so freely, and is so much a gentleman every manner of way, that he must be a highwayman.

Enter GIBBET, *in a Cloak.*

Gib. Landlord, landlord, is the coast clear?

Bon. O, Mr Gibbet! what's the news?

Gib. No matter; ask no questions; all's fair and honourable:—here, my dear Cherry, [*Gives her a bag*] two hundred sterling pounds, as good as ever hanged or saved a rogue; lay 'em by with the rest; and here—three wedding—or mourning rings; 'tis much the same, you know.——Here, two silver-hilted swords; I took these from fellows that never shew any part of their swords but the hilts.—Here is a diamond necklace, which the lady hid in the privatest place in the coach, but I found it out.—This gold watch I took from a pawnbroker's wife; it was left in her hands by a person of quality; there's the arms upon the case.

Cher. But who had you the money from?

Gib. Ah! poor woman, I pitied her:——from a poor lady, just eloped from her husband; she had made up her cargo, and was bound for Ireland, as hard as she could drive: she told me of her husband's barbarous usage, and so, faith, I left her half-a-crown.—But I had almost forgot, my dear Cherry, I have a present for you.

Cher. What is't?

Gib. A pot of ceruse, my child, that I took out of a lady's under-petticoat pocket.

Cher. What, Mr Gibbet, do you think that I paint?

Gib. Why, you jade, your betters do: I'm sure the lady that I took it from had a coronet upon her handkerchief——Here, take my cloak, and go secure the premises.

Cher. I will secure 'em. [*Exit.*

Bon. But, hark ye, where's Hounslow and Bagshot?

Gib. They'll be here to-night.

Bon. D'ye know of any other gentlemen o' the pad on this road?

Gib. No.

Bon. I fancy that I have two that lodge in the house just now.

Gib. The devil! how d'ye smoke 'em?

Bon. Why, the one is gone to church.

Gib. To church! That's suspicious, I must confess.

Bon. And the other is now in his master's chamber; he pretends to be a servant to the other: we'll call him out, and pump him a little.

Gib. With all my heart.

Bon. Mr Martin! Mr Martin!

Enter ARCHER, *combing a periwig, and singing.*

Gib. The roads are consumed deep: I'm as dirty as Old Brentford at Christmas.——A good, pretty fellow, that.—Whose servant are you, friend?

Arch. My master's.

Gib. Really!

Arch. Really.

Gib. That's much.—That fellow has been at the bar, by his evasions.—But pray, sir, what is your master's name?

Arch. Tall, all, dall.—[*Sings, and combs the periwig.*] This is the most obstinate curl——

Gib. I ask you his name?

Arch. Name, sir!—Tall, all, dall—I never asked his name in all my life—Tall, all, dall.

Bon. What think you now?

Gib. Plain, plain: he talks now as if he were before a judge. But pray, friend, which way does your master travel?

Arch. A horseback.

Gib. Very well again:—an old offender——Right—But I mean, does he go upwards or downwards?

Arch. Downwards, I fear, sir—Tall, lall.

Gib. I'm afraid thy fate will be a contrary way.

Bon. Ha, ha, ha!—Mr Martin, you're very arch.—This gentleman is only travelling towards Chester, and would be glad of your company, that's all ——Come, captain, you'll stay to-night, I suppose: I'll shew you a chamber——Come, captain.

Gib. Farewell, friend—— [*Exeunt.*

Arch. Captain, your servant.—Captain! a pretty fellow! 'Sdeath! I wonder that the officers of the army don't conspire to beat all scoundrels in red but their own.

Enter CHERRY.

Cher. Gone, and Martin here! I hope he did not listen: I would have the merit of the discovery all my own, because I would oblige him to love me. [*Aside.*] Mr Martin, who was that man with my father?

Arch. Some recruiting serjeant, or whipp'd-out trooper, I suppose.

Cher. All's safe, I find. [*Aside.*

Arch. Come, my dear, have you conn'd over the catechism I taught you last night?

Cher. Come, question me.

Arch. What is love?

Cher. Love is I know not what; it comes I know not how, goes I know not when.

Arch. Very well:—an apt scholar. [*Chucks her under the chin.*] Where does love enter?

Cher. Into the eyes.

Arch. And where go out?

Cher. I won't tell you.

Arch. What are the objects of that passion?

Cher. Youth, beauty, and clean linen.

Arch. The reason?

Cher. The two first are fashionable in nature, and the third at court.

Arch. That's my dear.—What are the signs and tokens of that passion?

Cher. A stealing look, a stammering tongue, words improbable, designs impossible, and actions impracticable.

Arch. That's my good child; kiss me——What must a lover do to obtain his mistress?

Cher. He must adore the person that disdains him, he must bribe the chambermaid that betrays him, and court the footman that laughs at him!——He must, he must——

Arch. Nay, child, I must whip you, if you don't mind your lesson.—He must treat his——

Cher. O! ay. He must treat his enemies with respect, his friends with indifference, and all the world with contempt; he must suffer much, and fear more; he must desire much, and hope little: in short, he must embrace his ruin, and throw himself away.

Arch. Had ever man so hopeful a pupil as mine! Come, my dear; why is Love called a riddle?

Cher. Because, being blind, he leads those that see, and, though a child, he governs a man.

Arch. Mighty well.—And why is Love pictured blind?

Cher. Because the painters, out of their weakness, or the privilege of their art, chose to hide those eyes they could not draw.

Arch. That's my dear little scholar; kiss me again——And why should Love, that's a child, govern a man.

Cher. Because that a child is the end of love.

Arch. And so ends love's catechism——And now, my dear, we'll go in, and make my master's bed.

Cher. Hold, hold, Mr Martin——you have taken a great deal of pains to instruct me, and what d'ye think I have learned by it?

Arch. What?

Cher. That your discourse and your habit are contradictions, and it would be nonsense in me to believe you a footman any longer.

Arch. 'Oons! what a witch it is!

Cher. Depend upon this, sir,—nothing in that garb shall ever tempt me; for though I was born to servitude, I hate it——Own your condition, swear you love me, and then——

Arch. And then——we shall go make my master's bed?

Cher. Yes.

Arch. You must know, then, that I am born a gentleman; my education was liberal; but I went to London a younger brother, fell into the hands of sharpers, who stripped me of my money, my friends disowned me, and now my necessity brings me to what you see.

Cher. Then take my hand———promise to marry me before you sleep, and I'll make you master of two thousand pounds.

Arch. How!

Cher. Two thousand pounds, that I have this minute in my own custody: so throw off your livery this instant, and I'll go find a parson.

Arch. What said you? a parson!

Cher. What! Do you scruple?

Arch. Scruple! No, no; but—two thousand pounds, you say?

Cher. And better.

Arch. 'Sdeath! what shall I do?——But hark ye, child; what need you make me master of your-

self and money, when you may have the same pleasure out of me, and still keep your fortune in your own hands?

Cher. Then you won't marry me?

Arch. I would marry you, but———

Cher. O! sweet sir, I'm your humble servant: you're fairly caught. Would you persuade me that any gentleman who could bear the scandal of wearing a livery would refuse two thousand pounds, let the condition be what it would—No, no, sir—But I hope you'll pardon the freedom I have taken, since it was only to inform myself of the respect that I ought to pay you. [*Going.*

Arch. Fairly bit, by Jupiter!—Hold, hold!—and have you actually two thousand pounds?

Cher. Sir, I have my secrets as well as you—when you please to be more open, I shall be more free; and be assured that I have discoveries that will match yours, be they what they will.——In the mean while, be satisfied that no discovery I make shall ever hurt you; but beware of my father.—— [*Exit.*

Arch. So—we're like to have as many adventures in our inn as Don Quixotte had in his.—Let me see—two thousand pounds! If the wench would promise to die when the money were spent, 'egad, one would marry her; but the fortune may go off in a year or two, and the wife may live ———Lord knows how long! Then an inn-keeper's daughter! Ay, that's the devil!—there my pride brings me off.

For whatsoe'er the sages charge on pride,—
The angels' fall, and twenty faults beside;
On earth, I'm sure, 'mong us of mortal calling,
Pride saves man oft, and woman too, from falling. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Lady* BOUNTIFUL'S *House.*

Enter Mrs SULLEN *and* DORINDA.

Mrs Sul. Ha, ha, ha!—My dear sister! let me embrace thee, now we are friends indeed; for I shall have a secret of yours as a pledge for mine ——Now you'll be good for something; I shall have you conversable in the subjects of the sex.

Dor. But do you think that I am so weak as to fall in love with a fellow at first sight?

Mrs Sul. Pshaw! now you spoil all:—Why should not we be as free in our friendships as the men?—I warrant you, the gentleman has got to his confidant already, has avowed his passion, toasted your health, called you ten thousand angels, has run over your lips, eyes, neck, shape, air, and every thing, in a description that warms their mirth to a second enjoyment.

Dor. Your hand, sister: I a'n't well.

Mrs Sul. So—she's breeding already—Come, child, up with it—hem a little—so—Now tell me, don't you like the gentleman that we saw at church just now?

Dor. The man's well enough.

Mrs Sul. Well enough! Is he not a demi-god, a Narcissus, a star, the man i' the moon?

Dor. O, sister! I'm extremely ill.

Mrs Sul. Shall I send to your mother, child, for a little cephalic plaster, to put to the soles of your feet? Or shall I send to the gentleman for something for you?——Come, unbosom yourself—the man is perfectly a pretty fellow: I saw him when he first came into church.

Dor. I saw him too, sister, and with an air that shone, methought, like rays about his person.

Mrs Sul. Well said;—up with it.

Dor. No forward coquet behaviour, no air to set him off, no studied looks, no artful posture, ——but nature did it all.

Mrs Sul. Better and better—One touch more—Come——

Dor. But then his looks—did you observe his eyes?

Mrs Sul. Yes, yes, I did——his eyes; well, what of his eyes?

Dor. Sprightly, but not wand'ring; they seemed to view, but never gaz'd on any thing but me—and then his looks so humble were, and yet so noble, that they aimed to tell me, that he could with pride die at my feet, though he scorned slavery any where else.

Mrs Sul. The physic works purely!——How d'ye find yourself now, my dear?

Dor. Hem! Much better, my dear.—Oh, here comes our Mercury!

Enter SCRUB.

Dor. Well, Scrub, what news of the gentleman?

Scrub. Madam, I have brought you a whole packet of news.

Dor. Open it quickly; come.

Scrub. In the first place, I enquired who the gentleman was? They told me he was a stranger. Secondly, I asked what the gentleman was? They answered and said, that they never saw him before. Thirdly, I enquired what countryman he was? They reply'd, 'twas more than they knew. Fourthly, I demanded whence he came? Their answer was, they could not tell. And fifthly, I asked whither he went? and they reply'd, they knew nothing of the matter.——And this is all I could learn.

Mrs Sul. But what do the people say? Cann't they guess?

Scrub. Why, some think he's a spy, some guess

he's a mountebank, some say one thing, some another; but, for my own part, I believe he's a jesuit!

Dor. A jesuit! why a jesuit?

Scrub. Because he keeps his horses always ready saddled, and his footman talks French.

Mrs Sul. His footman!

Scrub. Ay, he and the count's footmen were gabbering French like two intriguing ducks in a mill-pond; and I believe they talked of me; for they laugh'd consumedly.

Dor. What sort of livery has the footman?

Scrub. Livery! Lord, madam, I took him for a captain, he's so bedizzen'd with lace; and then he has tops to his shoes, up to his mid-leg, a silver-headed cane dangling at his knuckles:—he carries his hands in his pockets, and walks just so—[*Walks in a French air*] and has a fine long perriwig ty'd up in a bag—Lord, madam, he's clear another sort of a man than I.

Mrs Sul. That may easily be.——But what shall we do now, sister?

Dor. I have it——This fellow has a world of simplicity, and some cunning; the first hides the latter by abundance.——Scrub!

Scrub. Madam.

Dor. We have a great mind to know who this gentleman is, only for our satisfaction.

Scrub. Yes, madam, it would be a satisfaction, no doubt.

Dor. You must go and get acquainted with his footman, and invite him hither to drink a bottle of your ale, because you're butler to-day.

Scrub. Yes, madam, I'm butler every Sunday.

Mrs Sul. O, brave sister! o' my conscience you understand the mathematics already.—'Tis the best plot in the world! Your mother, you know, will be gone to church, my spouse will be got to the ale-house with his scoundrels, and the house will be our own—so we drop in by accident, and ask the fellow some questions ourselves. In the country, you know, any stranger is company, and we're glad to take up with the butler in a country dance, and happy if he will do us the favour.

Scrub. Oh, madam, you wrong me! I never refus'd your ladyship a favour in my life.

Enter GIPSEY.

Gip. Ladies, dinner's upon table.

Dor. Scrub, we'll excuse your waiting.——Go where we order'd you.

Scrub. I shall. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to the Inn.*

Enter AIMWELL *and* ARCHER.

Arch. Well, Tom, I find you're a marksman.

Aim. A marksman! who so blind could be as not discern a swan among the ravens?

Arch. Well, but hark'e, Aimwell.

Aim. Aimwell! call me Oroondates, Cesario, Amadis, all that romance can in a lover paint, and then I'll answer. Oh, Archer! I read her thousands in her looks: she look'd like Ceres in her harvest:—corn, wine, and oil, milk, honey, gardens, groves, and purling streams, play'd on her plenteous face.

Arch. Her face! her pocket, you mean! the corn, wine, and oil lie there. In short, she has twenty thousand pounds, that's the English on't.

Aim. Her eyes——

Arch. Are demi-cannons, to be sure; so I won't stand their battery. [*Going.*

Aim. Pray, excuse me; my passion must have vent.

Arch. Passion! What a plague! d'ye think these romantic airs will do our business? Were my temper as extravagant as yours, my adventures have something more romantic, by half.

Aim. Your adventures!

Arch. Yes.

The nymph that with her twice ten hundred pounds,
With brazen engine hot, and coif clear-starch'd,
Can fire the guest in warming of the bed——

There's a touch of sublime Milton for you, and the subject but an inn-keeper's daughter! I can play with a girl as an angler does with his fish; he keeps it at the end of his line, runs it up the stream and down the stream, till at last he brings it to hand, tickles the trout, and so whips it into his basket.

Enter BONIFACE.

Bon. Mr Martin, as the saying is——yonder's an honest fellow below, my lady Bountiful's butler, who begs the honour that you would go home with him, and see his cellar.

Arch. Do my baise-mains to the gentleman, and tell him I will do myself the honour to wait on him immediately, as the saying is.

Bon. I shall do your worship's commands, as the saying is. [*Exit, bowing obsequiously.*

Aim. What do I hear? soft Orpheus play, and fair Toftida sing!

Arch. Pshaw! Damn your raptures: I tell you here's a pump going to be put into the vessel, and the ship will get into harbour;—my life on't.—You say there's another lady very handsome there.

Aim. Yes, faith.

Arch. I'm in love with her already.

Aim. Cann't you give me a bill upon Cherry in the mean time?

Arch. No, no, friend; all her corn, wine, and oil is engross'd to my market!———And once more I warn you to keep your anchorage clear of mine; for if you fall foul of me, by this light, you shall go the bottom———What! make a prize of my little frigate, while I am upon the cruise for you. You're a pretty fellow indeed! [*Exit.*

Enter BONIFACE.

Aim. Well, well, I won't———Landlord, have you any tolerable company in the house? I don't care for dining alone.

Bon. Yes, sir, there's a captain below, as the saying is, that arriv'd about an hour ago.

Aim. Gentlemen of his coat are welcome every where: will you make a compliment for me,

and tell him I should be glad of his company, that's all?

Bon. Who shall I tell him, sir, would——

Aim. Ha! that stroke was well thrown in ——I'm only a traveller, like himself, and would be glad of his company, that's all.

Bon. I obey your commands, as the saying is. [*Exit.*

Enter ARCHER.

Arch. 'Sdeath! I had forgot:—What title will you give yourself?

Aim. My brother's, to be sure; he would never give me any thing else, so I'll make bold with his honour this bout.———You know the rest of your cue?

Arch. Ay, ay. [*Exit.*

Enter GIBBET.

Gib. Sir, I'm yours.

Aim. 'Tis more than I deserve, sir; for I don't know you.

Gib. I don't wonder at that, sir; for you never saw me before——I hope. [*Aside.*

Aim. And pray, sir, how came I by the honour of seeing you now?

Gib. Sir, I scorn to intrude upon any gentleman—but my landlord——

Aim. O, sir, I ask your pardon! you're the captain he told me of.

Gib. At your service, sir.

Aim. What regiment, may I be so bold?

Gib. A marching regiment, sir; an old corps.

Aim. Very old, if your coat be regimental. [*Aside.*] You have serv'd abroad, sir?

Gib. Yes, sir, in the plantations; 'twas my lot to be sent into the worst service: I would have quitted it indeed, but a man of honour, you know ——Besides, 'twas for the good of my country that I should be abroad——Any thing for the good of one's country——I'm a Roman for that.

Aim. One of the first, I'll lay my life. [*Aside.*] You found the West Indies very hot, sir?

Gib. Ay, sir, too hot for me.

Aim. Pray, sir, ha'n't I seen your face at Wills' Coffee-house?

Gib. Yes, sir, and at White's too.

Aim. And where's your company now, captain?

Gib. They a'n't come yet.

Aim. Why, d'ye expect them here?

Gib. They'll be here to-night, sir.

Aim. Which way do they march?

Gib. Across the country.——The devil's in't if I ha'n't said enough to encourage him to declare—but I'm afraid he's not right;—I must tack about. [*Aside.*

Aim. Is your company to quarter at Litchfield?

Gib. In this house, sir.

Aim. What! all?

Gib. My company is but thin,—ha, ha, ha!—we are but three,—ha, ha, ha!

Aim. You're merry, sir.

Gib. Ay, sir; you must excuse me. Sir, I understand the world, especially the art of travelling. I don't care, sir, for answering questions directly upon the road; for I generally ride with a charge about me.

Aim. Three or four, I believe. [*Aside.*

Gib. I am credibly inform'd that there are highwaymen upon this quarter; not, sir, that I could suspect a gentleman of your figure—— But, truly, sir, I have got such a way of evasion upon the road, that I don't care for speaking truth to any man.

Aim. Your caution may be necessary—— Then I presume you're no captain.

Gib. Not I, sir; captain is a good travelling name, and so I take it; it stops a great many foolish enquiries that are generally made about gentlemen that travel; it gives a man an air of something, and makes the drawers obedient—— and thus far I am a captain, and no farther.

Aim. And pray, sir, what is your true profession?

Gib. O! sir, you must excuse me—upon my word, sir, I don't think it safe to tell you.

Aim. Ha, ha! upon my word, I commend you.——

Enter BONIFACE.

Well, Mr Boniface, what's the news?

Bon. There's another gentleman below, as the saying is, that, hearing you were but two, would be glad to make the third man, if you'd give him leave.

Aim. What is he?

Bon. A clergyman, as the saying is.

Aim. A clergyman! Is he really a clergyman? or is it only his travelling name, as my friend the captain has it?

Bon. O! sir, he's a priest, and chaplain to the French officers in town.

Aim. Is he a Frenchman?

Bon. Yes, sir, born at Brussels.

Gib. A Frenchman, and a priest! I won't be seen in his company, sir: I have a value for my reputation, sir.

Aim. Nay, but, captain, since we are by ourselves—Can he speak English, landlord?

Bon. Very well, sir. You may know him, as the saying is, to be a foreigner by his accent, and that's all.

Aim. Then he has been in England before?

Bon. Never, sir; but he's master of languages, as the saying is; he talks Latin; it does me good to hear him talk Latin.

Aim. Then you understand Latin, Mr Boniface?

Bon. Not I, sir, as the saying is; but he talks it so very fast, that I'm sure it must be good.

Aim. Pray, desire him to walk up.

Bon. Here he is, as the saying is.

Enter FOIGARD.

Foig. Save you, gentlemens bote!

Aim. A Frenchman!—Sir, your most humble servant.

Foig. Och, dear joy! I am your most faithful shervant, and yours alsho.

Gib. Doctor, you talk very good English, but you have a mighty twang of the foreigner.

Foig. My English is very well for the vords; but we foreigners, you know, cannot bring our tongues about the pronunciation so soon.

Aim. A foreigner!—a downright Teague, by this light. [*Aside.*] Were you born in France, doctor?

Foig. I was educated in France, but I was borned at Brussels: I am a subject of the king of Spain, joy!

Gib. What king of Spain, sir? Speak.

Foig. Upon my shoul, joy, I cannot tell you as yet.

Aim. Nay, captain, that was too hard upon the doctor; he's a stranger.

Foig. O! let him alone, dear joy; I'm of a nation that is not easily put out of countenance.

Aim. Come, gentlemen, I'll end the dispute ——Here, landlord, is dinner ready?

Bon. Upon the table, as the saying is.

Aim. Gentlemen——pray——that door——

Foig. No, no, fait; the captain must lead.

Aim. No, doctor; the church is our guide.

Gib. Ay, ay, so it is.

[*Exit foremost, they follow.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to a Gallery in Lady* BOUNTIFUL'S *House.*

Enter ARCHER *and* SCRUB *singing, and hugging one another;* SCRUB *with a tankard in his hand:* GIPSY *listening at a distance.*

Scrub. Tall, all, dall——Come, my dear boy ——let's have that song once more.

Arch. No, no, we shall disturb the family—— But will you be sure to keep the secret?

Scrub. Pho! upon my honour, as I'm a gentleman.

Arch. 'Tis enough——You must know then, that my master is the lord viscount Aimwell; he fought a duel t'other day in London, wounded his man so dangerously that he thinks fit to withdraw till he hears whether the gentleman's wounds be mortal or not: he never was in this part of England before, so he chose to retire to this place; that's all.

Gip. And that's enough for me. [*Exit.*

Scrub. And where were you when your master fought?

Arch. We never know of our master's quarrels.

Scrub. No! if our masters in the country, here, receive a challenge, the first thing they do is to tell their wives; the wife tells the servants; the servants alarm the tenants; and in half an hour you shall have the whole country up in arms.

Arch. To hinder two men from doing what they have no mind for——But if you should chance to talk, now, of this business?

Scrub. Talk! Ah! sir, had I not learn'd the knack of holding my tongue, I had never liv'd so long in a great family.

Arch. Ay, ay, to be sure, there are secrets in all families.

Scrub. Secrets, O Lud!——but I'll say no more—Come, sit down, we'll make an end of our tankard.—Here——

Arch. With all my heart: who knows but you and I may come to be better acquainted, eh!—— Here's your lady's health: you have three, I think; and, to be sure, there must be secrets among 'em.

Scrub. Secrets! Ah! friend, friend!——I wish I had a friend————

Arch. Am I not your friend? Come, you and I will be sworn brothers.

Scrub. Shall we?

Arch. From this minute——Give me a kiss! And now, brother Scrub——

Scrub. And now, brother Martin, I will tell you a secret that will make your hair stand an end————You must know, that I am consumedly in love.

Arch. That's a terrible secret, that's the truth on't.

Scrub. That jade Gipsey, that was with us just now in the cellar, is the arrantest whore that ever wore a petticoat, and I'm dying for love of her.

Arch. Ha, ha, ha!——Are you in love with her person, or her virtue, brother Scrub?

Scrub. I should like virtue best, because it's more durable than beauty; for virtue holds good with some women, long and many a day after they have lost it.

Arch. In the country, I grant ye, where no woman's virtue is lost, till a bastard be found.

Scrub. Ay, could I bring her to a bastard, I should have her all to myself; but I dare not put it upon that lay, for fear of being sent for a soldier—Pray, brother, how do you gentlemen in London like that same pressing act?

Arch. Very ill, brother Scrub————'Tis the worst that ever was made for us: formerly, I remember the good days when we could dun our masters for our wages, and if they refused to pay us, we could have a warrant to carry 'em before a justice; but now, if we talk of eating, they have a warrant for us, and carry us before three justices.

Scrub. And, to be sure, we go, if we talk of eating; for the justices won't give their own servants a bad example. Now, this is my misfortune ——I dare not speak in the house, while that jade Gipsey dings about like a fury.——Once I had the better end of the staff.

Arch. And how comes the change now?

Scrub. Why, the mother of all this mischief is a priest.

Arch. A priest!

Scrub. Ay, a damn'd son of a whore of Babylon, that came over hither to say grace to the French officers, and eat up our provisions—— There's not a day goes over his head without a dinner or supper in this house.

Arch. How came he so familiar in the family?

Scrub. Because he speaks English as if he had

liv'd here all his life, and tells lies as if he had been a traveller from his cradle.

Arch. And this priest, I'm afraid, has converted the affections of your Gipsey.

Scrub. Converted! ay, and perverted, my dear friend—for I'm afraid he has made her a whore and a papist—But this is not all: there's the French count and Mrs Sullen, they're in confederacy, and for some private end of their own too, to be sure.

Arch. A very hopeful family yours, brother Scrub:—I suppose the maiden lady has her lover too.

Scrub. Not that I know—She's the best on 'em, that's the truth on't: but they take care to prevent my curiosity, by giving me so much business, that I am a perfect slave:—What d'ye think is my place in this family?

Arch. Butler, I suppose.

Scrub. Ah, Lord help your silly head!—I'll tell you—Of a Monday I drive the coach; of a Tuesday I drive the plough; on Wednesday I follow the hounds; on Thursday I dun the tenants; on Friday I go to market; on Saturday I draw warrants; and on Sunday I draw beer.

Arch. Ha, ha, ha! if variety be a pleasure in life, you have enough on't, my dear brother—But what ladies are those?

Scrub. Ours, ours; that upon the right hand is Mrs Sullen, and the other Mrs Dorinda——Don't mind 'em; sit still, man.

Enter Mrs SULLEN *and* DORINDA.

Mrs Sul. I have heard my brother talk of my lord Aimwell, but they say that his brother is the finer gentleman.

Dor. That's impossible, sister.

Mrs Sul. He's vastly rich and very close, they say.

Dor. No matter for that; if I can creep into his heart, I'll open his breast, I warrant him. I have heard say, that people may be guessed at by the behaviour of their servants; I could wish we might talk to that fellow.

Mrs Sul. So do I; for I think he's a very pretty fellow.—Come this way; I'll throw out a lure for him presently.

[*They walk a turn to the opposite side of the stage. Mrs* SULLEN *drops her fan,* ARCHER *runs, takes it up, and gives it to her.*

Arch. Corn, wine, and oil, indeed—But I think the wife has the greatest plenty of flesh and blood; she should be my choice—Ay, ay, say you so——Madam—your ladyship's fan.

Mrs Sul. O! sir, I thank you——What a handsome bow the fellow made!

Dor. Bow! Why, I have known several footmen come down from London, set up here for dancing-masters, and carry off the best fortunes in the country.

Arch. [*Aside.*] That project, for aught I know, had been better than ours—Brother Scrub, why don't you introduce me?

Scrub. Ladies, this is the strange gentleman's servant, that you saw at church to-day; I understood he came from London, and so I invited him to the cellar, that he might shew me the newest flourish in whetting my knives.

Dor. And I hope you have made much of him?

Arch. O yes, madam; but the strength of your ladyship's liquor is a little too potent for the constitution of your humble servant.

Mrs Sul. What! then you don't usually drink ale?

Arch. No, madam, my constant drink is tea, or a little wine and water; 'tis prescrib'd me by the physician, for a remedy against the spleen.

Scrub. O la! O la!—a footman have the spleen!

Mrs Sul. I thought that distemper had been only proper to people of quality.

Arch. Madam, like all other fashions, it wears out, and so descends to their servants; though, in a great many of us, I believe it proceeds from some melancholy particles in the blood, occasioned by the stagnation of wages.

Dor. How affectedly the fellow talks!—How long, pray, have you serv'd your present master?

Arch. Not long; my life has been mostly spent in the service of the ladies.

Mrs Sul. And pray, which service do you like best?

Arch. Madam, the ladies pay best; the honour of serving them is sufficient wages; there is a charm in their looks that delivers a pleasure with their commands, and gives our duty the wings of inclination.

Mrs Sul. That flight was above the pitch of a livery.—And, sir, would you not be satisfied to serve a lady again?

Arch. As groom of the chambers, madam, but not as a footman.

Mrs Sul. I suppose you serv'd as footman before?

Arch. For that reason I would not serve in that post again; for my memory is too weak for the load of messages that the ladies lay upon their servants in London. My lady Howd'ye, the last mistress I serv'd, call'd me up one morning, and told me,—Martin, go to my lady Allnight, with my humble service; tell her I was to wait on her ladyship yesterday, and left word, with Mrs Rebecca, that the preliminaries of the affair she knows of are stopt till we know the concurrence of the person that I know of, for which there are circumstances wanting which we shall accommodate at the old place; but that, in the mean time, there is a person about her ladyship, that, from several hints and surmises, was accessary, at a certain time, to the disappointments that naturally attend things, that, to her knowledge, are of more importance——

Mrs Sul. } Ha, ha! where are you going, sir?
Dor. }

Arch. Why, I ha'n't half done.

Scrub. I should not remember a quarter of it.

Arch. The whole how d'ye was about half an hour long; so happened to misplace two sylla-

bles, and was turned off, and rendered incapable.—

Dor. The pleasantest fellow, sister, I ever saw.—But, friend, if your master be married,—I presume you still serve a lady?

Arch. No, madam, I take care never to come into a married family; the commands of the master and mistress are always so contrary, that 'tis impossible to please both.

Dor. There's a main point gained.—My lord is not married, I find. [*Aside.*

Mrs Sul. But I wonder, friend, that, in so many good services, you had not a better provision made for you?

Arch. I don't know how, madam——I am very well as I am.

Mrs Sul. Something for a pair of gloves. [*Offering him money.*

Arch. I humbly beg leave to be excused. My master, madam, pays me; nor dare I take money from any other hand, without injuring his honour, and disobeying his commands.

Scrub. Brother Martin, brother Martin.

Arch. What do you say, brother Scrub?

Scrub. Take the money, and give it to me. [*Exeunt* ARCHER *and* SCRUB.

Dor. This is surprising.—Did you ever see so pretty a well-bred fellow?

Mrs Sul. The devil take him for wearing the livery.

Dor. I fancy, sister, he may be some gentleman, a friend of my lord's, that his lordship has pitch'd upon, for his courage, fidelity, and discretion, to bear him company in this dress, and who, ten to one, was his second.

Mrs Sul. It is so, it must be so, and it shall be so—For I like him.

Dor. What! better than the count?

Mrs Sul. The count happened to be the most agreeable man upon the place; and so I chose him to serve me in my design upon my husband—But I should like this fellow better in a design upon myself.

Dor. But now, sister, for an interview with this lord and this gentleman; how shall we bring that about?

Mrs Sul. Patience! you country ladies give no quarter, if once you be entered.—Would you prevent their desires, and give the fellows no wishing time?—Look'e, Dorinda, if my lord Aimwell loves you, or deserves you, he'll find a way to see you, and there we must leave it.——My business comes now upon the tapis——Have you prepared your brother?

Dor. Yes, yes.

Mrs Sul. And how did he relish it?

Dor. He said little, mumbled something to himself, and promised to be guided by me—but here he comes.

Enter SULLEN.

Sul. What singing was that I heard just now?

Mrs Sul. The singing in your head, my dear; you complained of it all day.

Sul. You're impertinent.

Mrs Sul. I was ever so, since I became one flesh with you.

Sul. One flesh! Rather two carcasses joined unnaturally together.

Mrs Sul. Or, rather, a living soul coupled to a dead body.

Dor. So—this is fine encouragement for me!

Sul. Yes, my wife shews what you must do.

Mrs Sul. And my husband shews what you must suffer.

Sul. 'Sdeath! why cann't you be silent?

Mrs Sul. 'Sdeath! why cann't you talk?

Sul. Do you talk to any purpose?

Mrs Sul. Do you think to any purpose?

Sul. Sister, hark'e—[*Whispers.*] I sha'n't be home till it be late. [*Exit.*

Mrs Sul. What did he whisper to ye?

Dor. That he would go round the back way, come into the closet, and listen, as I directed him.—But let me beg you once more, dear sister, to drop this project; for, as I told you before, instead of awaking him to kindness, you may provoke him to rage; and then who knows how far his brutality may carry him?

Mrs Sul. I'm provided to receive him, I warrant ye.—Away. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I—*Continues.*

Enter DORINDA, *meeting Mrs* SULLEN *and Lady* BOUNTIFUL.

Dor. News, dear sister, news, news!

Enter ARCHER, *running.*

Arch. Where, where is my lady Bountiful? Pray which is the old lady of you three?

L. Boun. I am.

Arch. O, madam, the fame of your ladyship's charity, goodness, benevolence, skill, and ability, has drawn me hither to implore your ladyship's help in behalf of my unfortunate master, who is this moment breathing his last.

L. Boun. Your master! where is he?

Arch. At your gate, madam: drawn by the appearance of your handsome house to view it nearer, and walking up the avenue, he was taken ill of a sudden, with a sort of I know not what: but down he fell, and there he lies.

L. Boun. Here, Scrub, Gipsey, all run, get my easy-chair down stairs, put the gentleman in it, and bring him in quickly, quickly.

Arch. Heaven will reward your ladyship for this charitable act.

L. Boun. Is your master used to these fits?

Arch. O yes, madam, frequently.——I have known him have five or six of a night.

L. Boun. What's his name?

Arch. Lord, madam, he's a-dying: a minute's care or neglect may save or destroy his life.

L. Boun. Ah, poor gentleman!—Come, friend, shew me the way; I'll see him brought in myself. [*Exit with* ARCHER.

Dor. O, sister, my heart flutters about strangely; I can hardly forbear running to his assistance.

Mrs Sul. And I'll lay my life he deserves your assistance more than he wants it. Did not I tell you that my lord would find a way to come at you? Love's his distemper, and you must be the physician: put on all your charms, summon all your fire into your eyes, plant the whole artillery of your looks against his breast, and down with him.

Dor. O, sister; I'm but a young gunner; I shall be afraid to shoot, for fear the piece should recoil, and hurt myself.

Mrs Sul. Never fear; you shall see me shoot before you, if you will.

Dor. No, no, dear sister; you have missed your mark so unfortunately, that I sha'n't care for being instructed by you.

Enter AIMWELL *in a chair, carried by* ARCHER *and* SCRUB, *Lady* BOUNTIFUL, GIPSEY; AIMWELL *counterfeiting a swoon.*

L. Boun. Here, here, let's see the hartshorn drops—Gipsey, a glass of fair water:—his fit's very strong——Bless me, how his hands are clench'd!

Arch. For shame, ladies, what d'ye do? Why don't you help us?——Pray, madam, [*To* DORINDA] take his hand, and open it, if you can, whilst I hold his head. [DORINDA *takes his hand.*

Dor. Poor gentleman!—Oh!—he has got my hand within his, and squeezes it unmercifully.

L. Boun. 'Tis the violence of his convulsion, child.

Arch. O, madam, he's perfectly possessed in these cases.—He'll bite you, if you don't have care.

Dor. Oh, my hand! my hand!

L. Boun. What's the matter with the foolish girl? I have got this hand open, you see, with a great deal of ease.

Arch. Ay, but, madam, your daughter's hand is somewhat warmer than your ladyship's, and the heat of it draws the force of the spirits that way.

Mrs Sul. I find, friend, you're very learn'd in these sort of fits.

Arch. 'Tis no wonder, madam, for I'm often troubled with them myself: I find myself extremely ill at this minute.

[*Looking hard at Mrs* SULLEN.

Mrs Sul. [*Aside.*] I fancy I could find a way to cure you.

L. Boun. His fit holds him very long.

Arch. Longer than usual, madam.

L. Boun. Where did his illness take him first, pray?

Arch. To-day, at church, madam.

L. Boun. In what manner was he taken?

Arch. Very strangely, my lady. He was of a sudden touched with something in his eyes, which, at the first, he only felt, but could not tell whether 'twas pain or pleasure.

L. Boun. Wind, nothing but wind. Your master should never go without a bottle to smell to ——Oh!—he recovers—the lavender water—some feathers to burn under his nose—Hungary water to rub his temples—O, he comes to himself.—Hem a little, sir, hem—Gipsey, bring the cordial water. [AIMWELL *seems to awake in amaze.*

Dor. How do you do, sir?

Aim. Where am I? [*Rising.*
Sure I have pass'd the gulph of silent death,
And now am landed on the Elysian shore—
Behold the goddess of those happy plains,
Fair Proserpine—Let me adore thy bright divinity.

[*Kneels to* DORINDA, *and kisses her hand.*

Mrs Sul. So, so, so.—I knew where the fit would end.

Aim. Eurydice, perhaps——
How could thy Orpheus keep his word,
And not look back on thee?
No treasure but thyself could, sure, have brib'd him
To look one minute off thee.

L. Boun. Delirious, poor gentleman!

Arch. Very delirious, madam, very delirious!

Aim. Martin's voice, I think.

Arch. Yes, my lord.——How does your lordship?

L. Boun. Lord! did you mind that, girls?

Aim. Where am I?

Arch. In very good hands, sir.——You were taken just now with one of your old fits, under the trees, just by this good lady's house; her ladyship had you taken in, and has miraculously brought you to yourself, as you see.

Aim. I am so confounded with shame, madam, that I can now only beg pardon, and refer my acknowledgments for your ladyship's care, till an opportunity offers of making some amends.—— I dare to be no longer troublesome.—Martin, give two guineas to the servants. [*Going.*

Dor. Sir, you may catch cold by going so soon into the air; you don't look, sir, as if you were perfectly recover'd.

[*Here* ARCHER *talks to Lady* BOUNTIFUL *in dumb shew.*

Aim. That I shall never be, madam; my present illness is so rooted, that I must expect to carry it to my grave.

L. Boun. Come, sir, your servant has been telling me that you're apt to relapse, if you go into the air—Your good manners sha'n't get the better of ours—You shall sit down again, sir—Come, sir, we don't mind ceremonies in the country—

Here, Gipsey, bring the cordial water—Here, sir, my service t'ye—You shall taste my water; 'tis a cordial, I can assure you, and of my own making. [AIM. *drinks.*] Drink it off, sir.—And how d'ye find yourself now, sir?

Aim. Somewhat better, tho' very faint still.

L. Boun. Ay, ay, people are always faint after those fits.—Come, girls, you shall shew the gentleman the house: 'tis but an old family building, sir; but you had better walk about, and cool by degrees, than venture immediately into the air:—but you'll find some tolerable pictures.—Dorinda, shew the gentleman the way. I must go to the poor woman below. [*Exit.*

Dor. This way, sir.

Aim. Ladies, shall I beg leave for my servant to wait upon you, for he understands pictures very well.

Mrs Sul. Sir, we understand originals as well as he does pictures, so he may come along.

[*Exeunt* DORINDA, *Mrs* SULLEN, ARCHER. AIMWELL *leads* DORINDA.

Enter FOIGARD *and* SCRUB, *meeting.*

Foig. Save you, master Scrub.

Scrub. Sir, I won't be sav'd your way—I hate a priest, I abhor the French, and I defy the devil.——Sir, I am a bold Briton, and will spill the last drop of my blood to keep out popery and slavery.

Foig. Master Scrub, you would put me down in politics, and so I would be speaking with Mrs Gipsey.

Scrub. Good master priest, you cann't speak with her; she's sick, sir; she's gone abroad, sir; she's—dead two months ago, sir.

Enter GIPSEY.

Gip. How now, impudence! How dare you talk so saucily to the doctor? Pray, sir, don't take it ill; for the common people of England are not so civil to strangers as—

Scrub. You lie, you lie—'tis the common people, such as you are, that are civilest to strangers.

Gip. Sirrah, I have a good mind to—Get you out, I say.

Scrub. I won't.

Gip. You won't, sauce-box——Pray, doctor, what is the captain's name that came to your inn last night?

Scrub. The captain! ah, the devil! there she hampers me again;—the captain has me on one side, and the priest on t'other——So, between the gown and sword, I have a fine time on't. [*Going.*

Gip. What, sirrah, won't you march?

Scrub. No, my dear, I won't march—but I'll walk:——And I'll make bold to listen a little too. [*Goes behind the side scene, and listens.*

Gip. Indeed, doctor, the count has been barbarously treated, that's the truth on't.

Foig. Ah, Mistress Gipsey, upon my shoul, now, gra, his complainings would mollify the marrow in your bones, and move the bowels of your commiseration:—he weeps, and he dances, and he fistles, and he swears, and he laughs, and he stamps, and he sings; in conclusion, joy, he's afflicted, *a la François*, and a stranger would not know whider to cry or to laugh with him.

Gip. What would you have me do, doctor?

Foig. Noting, joy, but only hide the count in Mrs Sullen's closet, when it is dark.

Gip. Nothing! is that nothing? It would be both a sin and a shame, doctor.

Foig. Here are twenty louidores, joy, for your shame, and I will give you an absolution for the shin.

Gip. But won't that money look like a bribe?

Foig. Dat is according as you shall tauk it.—If you receive the money before-hand, 'twill be logice, a bribe; but if you stay till afterwards, 'twill be only a gratification.

Gip. Well, doctor, I'll take it logice.——But what must I do with my conscience, sir?

Foig. Leave dat wid me, joy: I am your priest, gra, and your conscience is under my hands.

Gip. But should I put the count into the closet—

Foig. Vell, is dere any shin for a man's being in a closhet? One may go to prayers in a closhet.

Gip. But if the lady should come into her chamber, and go to bed?

Foig. Vell, and is dere any shin in going to bed, joy?

Gip. Ay, but if the parties should meet, doctor?

Foig. Vell, den——the parties must be responsible.——Do you be gone after putting the count into the closhet, and leave the shins wid themselves.——I will come with the count to instruct you in your chamber.

Gip. Well, doctor, your religion is so pure—Methinks I'm so easy after an absolution, and can sin afresh with so much security, that I'm resolved to die a martyr to't——Here's the key of the garden-door: come in the back way, when 'tis late—I'll be ready to receive you; but don't so much as whisper, only take hold of my hand; I'll lead you, and do you lead the count, and follow me. [*Exeunt.*

Enter SCRUB.

Scrub. What witchcraft now have these two imps of the devil been hatching here?—There's twenty louidores; I heard that, and saw the purse: but I must give room to my betters. [*Exit.*

Enter Mrs SULLEN *and* ARCHER.

Mrs Sul. Pray, sir, [*To* ARCHER] how d'ye like that piece?

Arch. O, 'tis Leda—You find, madam, how Jupiter came disguis'd to make love.

Mrs Sul. Pray, sir, what head is that in the corner there?

Arch. O, madam, 'tis poor Ovid in his exile.

Mrs Sul. What was he banished for?

Arch. His ambitious love, madam. [*Bowing.*] His misfortune touches me.

Mrs Sul. Was he successful in his amours?

Arch. There he has left us in the dark—— He was too much a gentleman to tell.

Mrs Sul. If he were secret I pity him.

Arch. If he were successful I envy him.

Mrs Sul. How d'ye like that Venus over the chimney?

Arch. Venus! I protest, madam, I took it for your picture; but, now I look again, 'tis not handsome enough.

Mrs Sul. O, what a charm is flattery! If you would see my picture, there it is, over the cabinet—How d'ye like it?

Arch. I must admire any thing, madam, that has the least resemblance of you—but, methinks, madam—[*He looks at the picture and Mrs* SULLEN, *three or four times, by turns.*] Pray, madam, who drew it?

Mrs Sul. A famous hand, sir.

[*Here* AIMWELL *and* DORINDA *go off.*

Arch. A famous hand, madam!—Your eyes, indeed, are featured here, but where's the sparkling moisture, shining fluid, in which they swim? The picture, indeed, has your dimples, but where's the swarm of killing Cupids that should ambush there? The lips, too, are figured out, but where's the carnation dew, the pouting ripeness, that tempts the taste in the original?

Mrs Sul. Had it been my lot to have match'd with such a man! [*Aside.*

Arch. Your breasts, too.—Presumptuous man! What! paint Heaven!—A-propos, madam, in the very next picture is Salmoneus, that was struck dead with lightning, for offering to imitate Jove's thunder: I hope you served the painter so, madam?

Mrs Sul. Had my eyes the power of thunder, they should employ their lightning better.

Arch. There's the finest bed in that room, madam; I suppose 'tis your ladyship's bed-chamber?

Mrs Sul. And what then, sir?

Arch. I think the quilt is the richest that I ever saw—I cann't, at this distance, madam, distinguish the figures of the embroidery. Will you give me leave, madam——

Mrs Sul. The devil take his impudence—Sure, if I gave him an opportunity, he durst not be rude. I have a great mind to try———[*Going, returns.*] 'Sdeath! what am I doing!—And alone too!—Sister, sister!

Arch. I'll follow her close——

For where a Frenchman durst attempt to storm,
A Briton, sure, the work may well perform.

[*Going.*

Enter SCRUB.

Scrub. Martin! Brother Martin!

Arch. O, brother Scrub, I beg your pardon; I was not a-going:—here's a guinea my master order'd you.

Scrub. A guinea! hi, hi, hi!—a guinea! eh?—by this light, it is a guinea; but, I suppose, you expect twenty shillings in change?

Arch. Not at all; I have another for Gipsey.

Scrub. A guinea for her! Fire and faggot for the witch——Sir, give me that guinea, and I'll discover a plot.

Arch. A plot!

Scrub. Ay, sir, a plot, a horrid plot—First, it must be a plot, because there's a woman in't: secondly, it must be a plot, because there's a priest in't: thirdly, it must be a plot, because there's French gold in't: and fourthly, it must be a plot, because I don't know what to make on't.

Arch. Nor any body else, I'm afrai , brother Scrub.

Scrub. Truly I'm afraid so too; for where there's a priest and a woman, there's always a mystery and a riddle——This I know, that here has been the doctor, with a temptation in one hand, and an absolution in the other, and Gipsey has sold herself to the devil; I saw the price paid down; my eyes shall take their oath on't.

Arch. And is all this bustle about Gipsey?

Scrub. That's not all: I could hear but a word here and there; but I remember they mentioned a count, a closet, a back-door, and a key.

Arch. The count! Did you hear nothing of Mrs Sullen?

Scrub. I did hear some word that sounded that way; but whether it was Sullen or Dorinda, I could not distinguish.

Arch. You have told this matter to nobody, brother?

Scrub. Told! No, sir, I thank you for that: I'm resolv'd never to speak one word, pro nor con, till we have a peace.

Arch. You're i' th' right, brother Scrub.—— Here's a treaty a-foot between the count and the lady. The priest and the chamber-maid are plenipotentiaries. It shall go hard but I shall find a way to be included in the treaty.—Where's the doctor now?

Scrub. He and Gipsey are, this moment, devouring my lady's marmalade in the closet.

Aim. [*From without.*] Martin! Martin!

Arch. I come, sir, I come.

Scrub. But you forgot the other guinea, brother Martin.

Arch. Here, I give it with all my heart.

Scrub. And I take it with all my soul. [*Exeunt severally.*] I'cod, I'll spoil your plotting, Mrs Gipsey; and if you should set the captain upon me, these two guineas will buy me off.

[*Exit.*

Enter Mrs SULLEN *and* DORINDA, *meeting.*

Mrs Sul. Well, sister.

Dor. And well, sister.

Mrs Sul. What's become of my lord?

Dor. What's become of his servant?

Mrs Sul. Servant! He's a prettier fellow, and a finer gentleman, by fifty degrees, than his master.

Dor. O' my conscience, I fancy you could beg that fellow at the gallows foot.

Mrs Sul. O' my conscience, I could, provided I could put a friend of yours in his room.

Dor. You desir'd me, sister, to leave you, when you transgress'd the bounds of honour.

Mrs Sul. Thou dear censorious country girl —what dost mean? You cann't think of the man without the bed-fellow, I find.

Dor. I don't find any thing unnatural in that thought: while the mind is conversant with flesh and blood, it must conform to the humours of the company.

Mrs Sul. How a little love and conversation improve a woman! Why, child, you begin to live ——You never spoke before.

Dor. Because I was never spoken to before. —My lord has told me that I have more wit and beauty than any of my sex; and, truly, I begin to think the man is sincere.

Mrs Sul. You're in the right, Dorinda: pride is the life of a woman, and flattery is our daily bread. But I'll lay you a guinea that I had finer things said to me than you had.

Dor. Done.——What did your fellow say to you?

Mrs Sul. My fellow took the picture of Venus for mine.

Dor. But my lover took me for Venus herself.

Mrs Sul. Common cant! Had my spark called me a Venus directly, I should have believed him to be a footman in good earnest.

Dor. But my lover was upon his knees to me.

Mrs Sul. And mine was upon his tiptoes to me.

Dor. Mine vow'd to die for me.

Mrs Sul. Mine swore to die with me.

Dor. Mine kiss'd my hand ten thousand times.

Mrs Sul. Mine has all that pleasure to come.

Dor. Mine spoke the softest moving things.

Mrs Sul. Mine had his moving things too.

Dor. Mine offered marriage.

Mrs Sul. O Lard! D'ye call that a moving thing?

Dor. The sharpest arrow in his quiver, my dear sister.—Why, my twenty thousand pounds may lie brooding here these seven years, and hatch nothing at last but some ill-natur'd clown like yours; whereas, if I marry my lord Aimwell, there will be title, place, and precedence, the Park, the play, and the drawing-room, splendour, equipage, noise, and flambeaux—Hey, my lady Aimwell's servant there!—Lights, lights, to the stairs!—My lady Aimwell's coach, put forward!—Stand by, make room for her ladyship!—Are not these things moving?—What! melancholy of a sudden!

Mrs Sul. Happy, happy sister! Your angel has been watchful for your happiness, whilst mine has slept, regardless of his charge—Long smiling years of circling joys for you, but not one hour for me! [*Weeps.*

Dor. Come, my dear, we'll talk on something else.

Mrs Sul. O, Dorinda, I own myself a woman, full of my sex, a gentle, generous soul,—easy and yielding to soft desires; a spacious heart, where love and all his train might lodge: And must the fair apartment of my breast be made a stable, for a brute to lie in?

Dor. Meaning your husband, I suppose?

Mrs Sul. Husband! No—Even husband is too soft a name for him.—But come, I expect my brother here to-night or to-morrow: he was abroad when my father marry'd me: perhaps he'll find a way to make me easy.

Dor. Will you promise to make yourself easy in the mean time with my lord's friend?

Mrs Sul. You mistake me, sister—It happens with us as among the men,—the greatest talkers are the greatest cowards: and there's a reason for it: those spirits evaporate in prattle which might do more mischief if they took another course —Though, to confess the truth, I do love that fellow; and if I met him dressed as he should be, and I undressed as I should be—look'e, sister, I have no supernatural gifts—I cann't swear I could resist the temptation——though I can safely promise to avoid it; and that's as much as the best of us can do. [*Exeunt.*

Enter AIMWELL *and* ARCHER, *laughing.*

Arch. And the awkward kindness of the good motherly old gentlewoman.

Aim. And the coming easiness of the young one—'Sdeath! 'tis a pity to deceive her.

Arch. Nay, if you adhere to those principles, stop where you are.

Aim. I cann't stop, for I love her to distraction.

Arch. 'Sdeath! if you love her a hair's-breadth beyond discretion, you must go no farther.

Aim. Well, well, any thing to deliver us from sauntering away our idle evenings at White's, Toms', or Wills', and be stinted to bare looking at our old acquaintance the cards, because our impotent pockets cann't afford us a guinea for the mercenary drabs, and ten thousand such rascally tricks—had we out-liv'd our fortunes among our acquaintance—But now———

Arch. Ay, now is the time to prevent all this. —Strike while the iron is hot.—This priest is the luckiest part of our adventure; he shall marry you, and pimp for me.

Aim. But I should not like a woman that can be so fond of a Frenchman.

Arch. Alas! sir, necessity has no law; the lady may be in distress. But if the plot lies as I suspect—I must put on the gentleman——But here comes the doctor. I shall be ready. [*Exit.*

Enter FOIGARD.

Foig. Save you, noble friend.

Aim. O, sir, your servant.—Pray, doctor, may I crave your name?

Foig. Fat naam is upon me? My naam is Foigard, joy.

Aim. Foigard? a very good name for a clergy-

man.—Pray, Doctor Foigard, were you ever in Ireland?

Foig. Ireland? No, joy. Fat sort of plaace is dat saam Ireland? Dey say de people are catch'd dere when dey are young.

Aim. And some of 'em here, when they are old—as, for example—[*Takes* FOIGARD *by the shoulder.*] Sir, I arrest you as a traitor against the government: you're a subject to England, and this morning shewed me a commission, by which you served as chaplain in the French army. This is death by our law, and your reverence must hang for it.

Foig. Upon my shoul, noble friend, dis is strange news you tell me.—Fader Foigard a subject of England! The son of a burgomaster of Brussels a subject of England! Ubooboo.

Aim. The son of a bog-trotter in Ireland! Sir, your tongue will condemn you before any bench in the kingdom.

Foig. And is my tongue all your evidensh, joy?

Aim. That's enough.

Foig. No, no, joy; for I will never speak English no more.

Aim. Sir, I have other evidence—Here, Martin, you know this fellow.

Enter ARCHER.

Arch. [*In a brogue.*] Saave you, my dear cussen, how does your health?

Foig. Ah! upon my shoul dere is my countryman, and his brogue will hang mine. [*Aside.*] Mynhere, Ick wet neat watt hey zacht, Ick Universton ewe neat, sacramant.

Aim. Altering your language won't do, sir: this fellow knows your person, and will swear to your face.

Foig. Faash! Fey, is dere brogue upon my faash too!

Arch. Upon my soulvation dere ish, joy——But, Cussen Mackshane, vil'you not put a remembrance upon me?

Foig. Mackshane! By St Paatrick, dat is my naam, sure enough. [*Aside.*

Aim. I fancy, Archer, we have it.

Foig. The devil hang you, joy——By fat acquaintance are you my cussen?

Arch. O, de devil hang yourshelf, joy!—You know we were little boys togeder upon de school, and your foster-moder's son was marry'd upon my nurse's shister, joy, and so we are Irish cussens.

Foig. De devil take de relation! Vel, joy, and fat school was it?

Arch. I think it was——Aay——'twas Tipperary.

Foig. Now, upon my shoul, joy, it was Kilkenny.

Aim. That's enough for us——Self-confession——Come, sir, we must deliver you into the hands of the next magistrate.

Arch. He sends you to gaol, you're try'd next assizes, and away you go, swing into purgatory.

Foig. And is it so wid you, cussen?

Arch. It vil be so vid you, cussen, if you don't immediately confess the secret between you and Mrs Gipsey——Look'e, sir, the gallows or the secret, take your choice.

Foig. The gallows! Upon my shoul I hate that shaam gallows, for it is a diseashe dat is fatal to our family——Vel, den, there is noting, shentlemens; but Mrs Sullen would speak wid de count in her chamber at midnight; and dere is no harm, joy; for I am to conduct the count to de plaash myself.

Arch. As I guess'd——Have you communicated the matter to the count?

Foig. I have not sheen him since.

Arch. Right again.——Why, then, doctor,—you shall conduct me to the lady instead of the count.

Foig. Fat, my cussen to the lady! Upon my shoul, gra, dat's too much upon the brogue.

Arch. Come, come, doctor, consider we have got a rope about your neck, and if you offer to squeak, we'll stop your wind-pipe, most certainly:—we shall have another job for you in a day or two, I hope.

Aim. Here's company coming this way; let's into my chamber, and there concert our affairs farther.

Arch. Come, my dear cussen, come along.

Foig. Arra, the devil taake our relashion.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter BONIFACE, HOUNSLOW, *and* BAGSHOT, *at one door,* GIBBET *at the opposite.*

Gib. Well, gentlemen, 'tis a fine night for our enterprize.

Houns. Dark as hell.

Bag. And blows like the devil.—Our landlord here has shew'd us the window where we must break in, and tells us the plate stands in the wainscoat cupboard in the parlour.

Bon. Ay, ay, Mr Bagshot, as the saying is, knives and forks, cups and canns, tumblers and tankards——There's one tankard, as the saying is, that's near upon as big as me; it was a present to the squire from his god-mother, and smells of nutmeg and toast like an East-India ship.

Houns. Then you say we must divide at the stair-head?

Bon. Yes, Mr Hounslow, as the saying is——At one end of the gallery lies my lady Bountiful and her daughter, and at the other Mrs Sullen—As for the squire——

Gib. He's safe enough; I have fairly enter'd him, and he's more than half seas over already—But such a parcel of scoundrels are got about him there, that, 'egad, I was ashamed to be seen in their company.

Bon. 'Tis now twelve, as the saying is—Gentlemen, you must set out at one.

Gib. Hounslow, do you and Bagshot see our arms fix'd, and I'll come to you presently.

Houns. and Bag. We will. [*Exeunt.*

Gib. Well, my dear Bonny, you assure me that Scrub is a coward?

Bon. A chicken, as the saying is—You'll have no creature to deal with but the ladies.

Gib. And I can assure you, friend, there's a great deal of address and good manners in robbing a lady: I am the most a gentleman that way that ever travelled the road—But, my dear Bonny, this prize will be a galleon, a Vigo business—— I warrant you we shall bring off three or four thousand pound.

Bon. In plate, and jewels, and money, as the saying is, you may.

Gib. Why then, Tyburn, I defy thee: I'll get up to town, sell off my horse and arms, buy myself some pretty employment in the law, and be as snug and as honest as e'er a long gown of 'em all.

Bon. And what think you then of my daughter Cherry for a wife?

Gib. Look'e, my dear Bonny—Cherry is the goddess I adore, as the song goes; but it is a maxim, that man and wife should never have it in their power to hang one another; for if they should, the Lord have mercy upon them both.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I—*Continues.*

Knocking without. Enter BONIFACE.

Bon. Coming, coming——A coach and six foaming horses at this time o' night! Some great man, as the saying is, for he scorns to travel with other people.

Enter Sir CHARLES FREEMAN.

Sir Cha. What, fellow! a public house, and a-bed when other people sleep!

Bon. Sir, I a'n't a-bed, as the saying is.

Sir Cha. I see that, as the saying is!—Is Mr Sullen's family a-bed, think'e?

Bon. All but the squire himself, sir, as the saying is; he's in the house.

Sir Cha. What company has he?

Bon. Why, sir, there's the constable, Mr Gage the exciseman, the hunch-back'd barber, and two or three other gentlemen.

Sir Cha. I find my sister's letters gave me a true picture of her spouse.

Enter SULLEN, *drunk.*

Bon. Sir, here's the squire.

Sul. The puppies left me asleep——sir.

Sir Cha. Well, sir.

Sul. Sir, I am an unfortunate man——I have three thousand pounds a-year, and cann't get a man to drink a cup of ale with me.

Sir Cha. That's very hard.

Sul. Ay, sir—And unless you have pity upon me, and smoke one pipe with me, I must e'en go home to my wife, and I had rather go to the devil, by half.

Sir Cha. But, I presume, sir, you won't see your wife to-night; she'll be gone to bed—You don't use to lie with your wife in that pickle?

Sul. What! not lie with my wife! Why, sir, do you take me for an atheist or a rake?

Sir Cha. If you hate her, sir, I think you had better lie from her.

Sul. I think so too, friend———But I am a justice of peace, and must do nothing against the law.

Sir Cha. Law! As I take it, Mr Justice, nobody observes law for law's sake, only for the good of those for whom it was made.

Sul. But if the law orders me to send you to gaol, you must lie there, my friend.

Sir Cha. Not unless I commit a crime that deserves it.

Sul. A crime! Oons! a'n't I married?

Sir Cha. Nay, sir, if you call marriage a crime, you must disown it for a law.

Sul. Eh!—I must be acquainted with you, sir ——But, sir, I should be very glad to know the truth of this matter.

Sir Cha. Truth, sir, is a profound sea, and few there be that dare wade deep enough to find the bottom on't; besides, sir, I'm afraid the line of your understanding mayn't be long enough.

Sul. Look'e, sir, I have nothing to say to your sea of truth, but if a good parcel of land can entitle a man to a little truth, I have as much as any he in the county.

Bon. I never heard your worship, as the saying is, talk so much before.

Sul. Because I never met with a man that I lik'd before.

Bon. Pray, sir, as the saying is, let me ask you one question:—Are not man and wife one flesh?

Sir Cha. You and your wife, Mr Guts, may be one flesh, because you are nothing else; but rational creatures have minds, that must be united.

Sul. Minds!

Sir Cha. Ay, minds, sir. Don't you think that the mind takes place of the body?

Sul. In some people.

Sir Cha. Then the interest of the master must be consulted before that of the servant.

Sul. Sir, you shall dine with me to-morrow—Oons! I always thought we were naturally one.

Sir Cha. Sir, I know that my two hands are naturally one, because they love one another, kiss one another, help one another in all actions of life; but I could not say so much if they were always at cuffs.

Sul. Then 'tis plain that we are two.

Sir Cha. Why don't you part with her, sir?

Sul. Will you take her, sir?

Sir Cha. With all my heart.

Sul. You shall have her to-morrow morning, and a venison-pasty into the bargain.

Sir Cha. You'll let me have her fortune too?

Sul. Fortune! Why, sir, I have no quarrel to her fortune——I hate only the woman, sir, and none but the woman shall go.

Sir Cha. But her fortune, sir——

Sul. Can you play at whist, sir?

Sir Cha. No, truly, sir.

Sul. Not at all-fours?

Sir Cha. Neither.

Sul. Oons! where was this man bred! [*Aside.*] Burn me, sir, I cann't go home; 'tis but two o'clock.

Sir Cha. For half an hour, sir, if you please—But you must consider, sir, 'tis late.

Sul. Late! that's the reason I cann't go to bed ——Come, sir—— [*Exeunt.*

Enter CHERRY, *runs across the stage, and knocks at* AIMWELL'S *chamber-door. Enter* AIMWELL, *in his night-cap and gown.*

Aim. What's the matter? You tremble, child; you're frightened!

Cher. No wonder, sir—But, in short, sir, this very minute a gang of rogues are gone to rob my lady Bountiful's house.

Aim. How!

Cher. I dogg'd 'em to the very door, and left 'em breaking in.

Aim. Have you alarm'd any body else with the news?

Cher. No, no, sir; I wanted to have discover'd the whole plot, and twenty other things, to your man Martin; but I have search'd the whole house, and cann't find him: where is he?

Aim. No matter, child.—Will you guide me immediately to the house?

Cher. With all my heart, sir.—My lady Bountiful is my godmother, and I love Mrs Dorinda so well——

Aim. Dorinda! the name inspires me: the glory and the danger shall be all my own.—Come, my life, let me but get my sword. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to the Bed-Chamber in Lady* BOUNTIFUL'S *House.*

Enter Mrs SULLEN *and* DORINDA, *undressed: a table and lights.*

Dor. 'Tis very late, sister:—no news of your spouse, yet?

Mrs Sul. No; I'm condemn'd to be alone till towards four, and then, perhaps, I may be executed with his company.

Dor. Well, my dear, I'll leave you to your rest: you'll go directly to bed, I suppose?

Mrs Sul. I don't know what to do; hey-ho!

Dor. That's a desiring sigh, sister.

Mrs Sul. This is a languishing hour, sister.

Dor. And might prove a critical minute, if the pretty fellow were here.

Mrs Sul. Here! What! in my bed-chamber, at two o'clock i' th' morning, I undress'd, the family asleep, my hated husband abroad, and my lovely fellow at my feet——O gad, sister!

Dor. Thoughts are free, sister, and them I allow you; so, my dear, good night. [*Exit.*

Mrs Sul. A good rest to my dear Dorinda—Thoughts are free! are they so? Why, then, suppose him here, dress'd like a youthful, gay, and burning bridegroom, [*Here* ARCHER *steals out of the closet*] with tongue enchanting, eyes bewitching, kness imploring—[*Turns a little on one side, and sees* ARCHER *in the posture she describes.*] Ah! [*Shrieks, and runs to the other side of the stage.*] Have my thoughts rais'd a spirit?——What are you, sir,—a man or a devil?

Arch. A man, a man, madam. [*Rising.*

Mrs Sul. How shall I be sure of it?

Arch. Madam, I'll give you demonstration this minute. [*Takes her hand.*

Mrs Sul. What, sir, do you intend to be rude?

Arch. Yes, madam, if you please.

Mrs Sul. In the name of wonder, whence came ye?

Arch. From the skies, madam——I'm Jupiter in love, and you shall be my Alcmena.

Mrs Sul. How came you in?

Arch. I flew in at the window, madam: your cousin Cupid lent me his wings, and your sister Venus open'd the casement.

Mrs Sul. I'm struck dumb with admiration.

Arch. And I with wonder. [*Looks passionately at her.*] How beautiful she looks!——the teeming jolly spring smiles in her blooming face, and when she was conceiv'd, her mother smelt to roses, look'd on lilies——

Lilies unfold their white, their fragrant charms,
When the warm sun thus darts into their arms.
[*Runs to her.*

Mrs Sul. Ah! [*Shrieks.*]

Arch. Oons! madam, what do you mean? You'll raise the house.

Mrs Sul. Sir, I'll wake the dead before I'll bear this.——What! approach me with the freedom of a keeper.——I'm glad on't.——Your impudence has cur'd me.

Arch. If this be impudence, [*Kneels*] I leave to your partial self: no panting pilgrim, after a tedious, painful voyage, e'er bow'd before his saint with more devotion.

Mrs Sul. Now, now, I'm ruin'd if he kneels. [*Aside.*] Rise, thou prostrate engineer; not all thy undermining skill shall reach my heart: rise, and know I am a woman without my sex: I can love to the tenderness of wishes, sighs, and tears——But go no farther—Still, to convince you that I'm more than woman, I can speak my frailty, confess my weakness, even for you——But——

Arch. For me! [*Going to lay hold on her.*

Mrs Sul. Hold, sir; build not upon that——for my most mortal hatred follows, if you disobey what I command you now—Leave me this minute——If he denies, I'm lost. [*Aside.*

Arch. Then you'll promise——

Mrs Sul. Any thing another time.

Arch. When shall I come?

Mrs Sul. To-morrow; when you will.

Arch. Your lips must seal the promise.

Mrs Sul. Pshaw!

Arch. They must, they must. [*Kisses her.*] Raptures and paradise! And why not now, my angel? The time, the place, silence and secrecy, all conspire—And now the conscious stars have pre-ordain'd this moment for my happiness.

[*Takes her in his arms.*

Mrs Sul. You will not, cannot, sure.

Arch. If the sun rides fast, and disappoints not mortals of to-morrow's dawn, this night shall crown my joys.

Mrs Sul. You shall kill me first.

Arch. I'll die with you. [*Carrying her off.*

Mrs Sul. Thieves, thieves, murder——

Enter SCRUB, *in his breeches, and one shoe.*

Scrub. Thieves, thieves, murder, popery!

Arch. Ha! the very timorous stag will kill in rutting time. [*Draws, and offers to stab* SCRUB.

Scrub. [*Kneeling.*] O! pray, sir, spare all I have, and take my life.

Mrs Sul. [*Holding* ARCHER'S *hand.*] What does the fellow mean?

Scrub. O, madam, down upon your knees, your marrow-bones——he's one of them.

Mrs Sul. Of whom?

Scrub. One of the rogues——I beg your pardon; one of the honest gentlemen that just now are broke into the house.

Arch. How!

Mrs Sul. I hope you did not come to rob me?

Arch. Indeed I did, madam; but I would have taken nothing but what you might very well have spared: but your crying thieves has wak'd this dreaming fool, and so he takes 'em for granted.

Scrub. Granted! 'Tis granted, sir: take all we have.

Mrs Sul. The fellow looks as if he were broke out of Bedlam.

Scrub. Oons! madam, they're broke into the house with fire and sword; I saw them, heard them; they'll be here this minute.

Arch. What, thieves!

Scrub. Under favour, sir, I think so.

Mrs Sul. What shall we do, sir?

Arch. Madam, I wish your ladyship a good-night.

Mrs Sul. Will you leave me?

Arch. Leave you! Lord, madam, did you not command me to be gone just now, upon pain of your immortal hatred?

Mrs Sul. Nay, but pray, sir—

[*Takes hold of him.*

Arch. Ha, ha, ha! now comes my turn to be ravish'd—You see, madam, you must use men one way or another: but take this by the way, good madam, that none but a fool will give you the benefit of his courage, unless you'll take his love along with it—How are they arm'd, friend?

Scrub. With sword and pistol, sir.

Arch. Hush!—I see a dark lanthorn coming thro' the gallery——Madam, be assured I will protect you, or lose my life.

Mrs Sul. Your life! No, sir, they can rob me of nothing that I value half so much; therefore, now, sir, let me entreat you to be gone.

Arch. No, madam; I'll consult my own safety for the sake of yours; I'll work by stratagem.—Have you courage enough to stand the appearance of them?

Mrs Sul. Yes, yes; since I have 'scap'd your hands I can face any thing.

Arch. Come hither, brother Scrub: don't you know me?

Scrub. Eh! my dear brother, let me kiss thee.

[*Kisses* ARCHER.

Arch. This way——Here——

[ARCHER *and* SCRUB *hide behind the bed.*

Enter GIBBET, *with a lanthorn in one hand, and a pistol in the other.*

Gib. Ay, ay, this is the chamber, and the lady alone.

Mrs Sul. Who are you, sir? What would you have? D'ye come to rob me?

Gib. Rob you! Alack-a-day, madam! I'm only a younger brother, madam; and so, madam, if you make a noise, I'll shoot you through the head. But don't be afraid, madam. [*Laying his lanthorn and pistol upon the table.*] These rings, madam—don't be concerned, madam; I have a profound respect for you, madam—your keys, madam—don't be frightened, madam—I'm the most of a gentleman——[*Searching her pockets.*] This necklace, madam—I never was rude to any lady!——I have a veneration—for this necklace ——[*Here* ARCHER, *having come round, and seized the pistol, takes* GIBBET *by the collar, trips up his heels, and claps the pistol to his breast.*

Arch. Hold, profane villain, and take the reward of thy sacrilege.

Gib. Oh! pray, sir, don't kill me; I a'n't prepared.

Arch. How many are there of 'em, Scrub?

Scrub. Five-and-forty, sir.

Arch. Then I must kill the villain, to have him out of the way.

Gib. Hold, hold, sir! we are but three, upon my honour.

Arch. Scrub, will you undertake to secure him?

Scrub. Not I, sir: kill him, kill him.

Arch. Run to Gipsey's chamber, there you'll find the doctor; bring him hither presently.

[*Exit* SCRUB, *running.*

Come, rogue, if you have a short prayer, say it.

Gib. Sir, I have no prayer at all: the government has provided a chaplain to say prayers for us on these occasions.

Mrs Sul. Pray, sir, don't kill him—you fright me as much as him.

Arch. The dog shall die, madam, for being the occasion of my disappointment—Sirrah, this moment is your last.

Gib. Sir, I'll give you two hundred pounds to spare my life.

Arch. Have you no more, rascal?

Gib. Yes, sir, I can command four hundred; but I must reserve two of 'em to save my life at the sessions.

Enter SCRUB *and* FOIGARD.

Arch. Here, doctor; I suppose Scrub and you, between you, may manage him—Lay hold of him.

[FOIGARD *lays hold of* GIBBET.

Gib. What! turn'd over to the priest already ——Look'e, doctor, you come before your time: I a'n't condemn'd yet, I thank ye.

Foig. Come, my dear joy, I vil secure your body and your shoul too; I vil make you a good catholic, and give you an absolution.

Gib. Absolution! Can you procure me a pardon, doctor?

Foig. No, joy.

Gib. Then you and your absolution may go to the devil.

Arch. Convey him into the cellar, there bind him:——take the pistol, and, if he offers to resist, shoot him through the head—and come back to us with all the speed you can.

Scrub. Ay, ay.—Come, doctor, do you hold him fast, and I'll guard him. [*Exeunt.*

Mrs Sul. But how came the doctor here?

Arch. In short, madam———[*Shrieking without.*] 'Sdeath! the rogues are at work with the other ladies:—I'm vex'd I parted with the pistol; but I must fly to their assistance—Will you stay here, madam, or venture yourself with me?

Mrs Sul. Oh, dear sir, with you.

[*Takes him by the arm, and exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to another Apartment in the House.*

Enter HOUNSLOW, *dragging in Lady* BOUNTIFUL, *and* BAGSHOT, *hauling in* DORINDA; *the rogues with swords drawn.*

Houn. Come, come, your jewels, mistress.

Bag. Your keys, your keys, old gentlewoman.

Enter AIMWELL.

Aim. Turn this way, villains! I durst engage an army in such a cause. [*He engages them both.*

Enter ARCHER *and Mrs* SULLEN.

Arch. Hold, hold, my lord; every man his bird, pray. [*They engage man to man; the rogues are thrown down, and disarmed.*] Shall we kill the rogues?

Aim. No, no, we'll bind them.

Arch. Ay, ay:—Here, madam, lend me your garter? [*To Mrs* SULLEN, *who stands by him.*

Mrs Sul. The devil's in this fellow; he fights, loves, and banters, all in a breath.—Here's a cord, that the rogues brought with them, I suppose.

Arch. Right, right; the rogue's destiny,—a rope to hang himself—Come, my lord,—this is but a scandalous sort of an office. [*Binding the rogues together.*] If our adventures should end in this sort of hangman work; but I hope there is something in prospect that—

Enter SCRUB.

Well, Scrub, have you secured your Tartar?

Scrub. Yes, sir, I left the priest and him disputing about religion.

Aim. And, pray, carry these gentlemen to reap the benefit of the controversy.

[*Delivers the prisoners to* SCRUB, *who leads them out.*

Mrs Sul. Pray, sister, how came my lord here?

Dor. And, pray, how came the gentleman here?

Mrs Sul. I'll tell you the greatest piece of villany. [*They talk apart.*

Aim. I fancy, Archer, you have been more successful in your adventure than the housebreakers.

Arch. No matter for my adventure, yours is the principal—Press her this minute to marry you—now, while she's hurried between the palpitation of her fear and the joy of her deliverance; now, while the tide of her spirits is at high flood, ——throw yourself at her feet, speak some romantic nonsense or other, confound her senses, bear down her reason, and away with her.—The priest is now in the cellar, and dares not refuse to do the work.

Aim. But how shall I get off without being observ'd?

Arch. You a lover! and not find a way to get off.——Let me see.

Aim. You bleed, Archer.

Arch. 'Sdeath! I'm glad on't; this wound will do the business. I'll amuse the old lady and Mrs Sullen about dressing my wound, while you carry off Dorinda.

Enter Lady BOUNTIFUL.

L. Boun. Gentlemen, could we understand how you would be gratified for the services——

Arch. Come, come, my lady, this is no time for compliments: I'm wounded, madam.

L. Boun. and Mrs Sul. How! wounded!

Dor. I hope, sir, you have received no hurt?

Aim. None but what you may cure.

[*Makes love in dumb shew.*

L. Boun. Let me see your arm, sir—I must have some powder-sugar, to stop the blood—O me!—an ugly gash.—Upon my word, sir, you must go to bed.

Arch. Ay, my lady, a bed would do very well—Madam, [*To Mrs* SULLEN] will you do me the favour to conduct me to a chamber.

L. Boun. Do, do, daughter—while I get the lint, and the probe, and the plaster ready.

[*Runs out one way,* AIMWELL *carries off* DORINDA *another.*

Arch. Come, madam, why don't you obey your mother's commands?

Mrs Sul. How can you, after what is past, have the confidence to ask me?

Arch. And, if you go to that, how can you, after what is past, have the confidence to deny me?

—Was not this blood shed in your defence, and my life exposed for your protection? Look'e, madam, I'm none of your romantic fools, that fight giants and monsters for nothing; my valour is downright Swiss: I am a soldier of fortune, and must be paid.

Mrs Sul. 'Tis ungenerous in you, sir, to upbraid me with your services.

Arch. 'Tis ungenerous in you, madam, not to reward 'em.

Mrs Sul. How! at the expence of my honour?

Arch. Honour! Can honour consist with ingratitude? If you deal like a woman of honour, do like a man of honour. D'ye think I would deny you in such a case?

Enter GIPSEY.

Gip. Madam, my lady ordered me to tell you, that your brother is below, at the gate.

Mrs Sul. My brother! Heavens be prais'd! —Sir, he shall thank you for your services; he has it in his power.

Arch. Who is your brother, madam?

Mrs Sul. Sir Charles Freeman. You'll excuse me, sir, I must go and receive him.

Arch. Sir Charles Freeman! 'Sdeath and hell!—my old acquaintance. Now, unless Aimwell has made good use of his time, all our fair machine goes souse into the sea, like the Eddystone. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*Changes to the Gallery in the same House.*

Enter AIMWELL *and* DORINDA.

Dor. Well, well, my lord, you have conquered. Your late generous action will, I hope, plead for my easy yielding, though, I must own, your lordship had a friend in the fort before.

Aim. The sweets of Hybla dwell upon her tongue.——Here, doctor.

Enter FOIGARD, *with a book.*

Foig. Are you prepared, bote?

Dor. I'm ready: but first, my lord, one word —I have a frightful example of a hasty marriage in my own family; when I reflect upon't, it shocks me. Pray, my lord, consider a little——

Aim. Consider! Do you doubt my honour, or my love?

Dor. Neither. I do believe you equally just as brave—And were your whole sex drawn out for me to chuse, I should not cast a look upon the multitude, if you were absent—But, my lord, I'm a woman: colours, concealments may hide a thousand faults in me—therefore, know me better first:—I hardly dare affirm I know myself in any thing except my love.

Aim. Such goodness who could injure? I find myself unequal to the task of villain. She has gained my soul, and made it honest, like her own —I cannot hurt her. [*Aside.*] Doctor, retire. [*Exit* FOIGARD.] Madam, behold your lover and your proselyte, and judge of my passion by my conversion.—I'm all a lie, nor dare I give a fiction to your arms: I'm all a counterfeit, except my passion.

Dor. Forbid it, Heaven!—A counterfeit!

Aim. I am no lord, but a poor needy man, come with a mean and scandalous design to prey upon your fortune:——But the beauties of your mind and person have so won me from myself, that, like a trusty servant, I prefer the interest of my mistress to my own.

Dor. Sure, I have had the dream of some poor mariner,—a sleeping image of a welcome port, and wake involv'd in storms—Pray, sir, who are you?

Aim. Brother to the man whose title I usurped, but stranger to his honour or fortune.

Dor. Matchless honesty!—Once I was proud, sir, of your wealth and title, but now am prouder that you want it. Now I can shew my love was justly levelled, and had no aim but love.—Doctor, come in.—

Enter FOIGARD *at one door*, GIPSEY *at another, who whispers* DORINDA.

Your pardon, sir; we sha'n't want you now, sir. —You must excuse me: I'll wait on you presently. [*Exit with* GIPSEY.

Foig. Upon my shoul, now, dis is foolish. [*Exit.*

Aim. Gone! and bid the priest depart—It has an ominous look.

Enter ARCHER.

Arch. Courage, Tom—shall I wish you joy?

Aim. No.

Arch. Oons! man, what ha' you been doing?

Aim. O, Archer, my honesty, I fear, has ruin'd me.

Arch. How!

Aim. I have discovered myself.

Arch. Discover'd! and without my consent! What! Have I embark'd my small remains in the same bottom with yours, and you dispose of all without my partnership?

Aim. O, Archer, I own my fault.

Arch. After conviction—'Tis then too late for pardon.———You may remember, Mr Aimwell, that you proposed this folly—As you began, so end it—Henceforth I'll hunt my fortune single ——So, farewell.

Aim. Stay, my dear Archer, but a minute.

Arch. Stay! What! to be despised, exposed, and laughed at!—No, I would sooner change conditions with the worst of the rogues we just now bound, than bear one scornful smile from the proud knight that once I treated as my equal.

Aim. What knight?

Arch. Sir Charles Freeman, brother to the lady that I had almost——But no matter for that: 'tis a cursed night's work, and so I leave you to make the best on't.

Aim. Freeman!——One word, Archer. Still I have hopes:—Methought she received my confession with pleasure.

Arch. 'Sdeath! who doubts it?

Aim. She consented after to the match; and still I dare believe she will be just.

Arch. To herself, I warrant her, as you should have been.

Aim. By all my hopes, she comes, and smiling comes.

Enter DORINDA, *mighty gay.*

Dor. Come, my dear lord—I fly with impatience to your arms——The minutes of my absence were a tedious year.—Where's this priest?

Enter FOIGARD.

Arch. Oons! a brave girl!

Dor. I suppose, my lord, this gentleman is privy to our affairs.

Arch. Yes, yes, madam; I'm to be your father.

Dor. Come, priest, do your office.

Arch. Make haste, make haste, couple 'em any way. [*Takes* AIMWELL'S *hand.*] Come, madam, I'm to give you————

Dor. My mind's alter'd: I won't.

Arch. Eh!————

Aim. I'm confounded.

Foig. Upon my shoul, and so is my shelf.

Arch. What's the matter now, madam?

Dor. Look'e, sir; one generous action deserves another——This gentleman's honour oblig'd him to hide nothing from me; my justice engages me to conceal nothing from him: in short, sir, you are the person that you thought you counterfeited,—you are the true lord viscount Aimwell, and I wish your lordship joy. Now, priest, you may be gone:—if my lord is now pleased with the match, let his lordship marry me in the face of the world.

Aim. Archer, what does she mean?

Dor. Here's a witness for my truth.

Enter Sir CHARLES *and Mrs* SULLEN.

Sir Cha. My dear Lord Aimwell, I wish you joy.

Aim. Of what?

Sir Cha. Of your honour and estate.—Your brother died the day before I left London, and all your friends have writ after you to Brussels: among the rest, I did myself the honour.

Arch. Hark'e, sir knight, don't you banter now?

Sir Cha. 'Tis truth, upon my honour.

Aim. Thanks to the pregnant stars, that form'd this accident.

Arch. Thanks to the womb of time, that brought it forth:—away with it.

Aim. Thanks to my guardian angel, that led me to the prize—— [*Taking* DORINDA'S *hand.*

Arch. And double thanks to the noble Sir Charles Freeman.——My lord, I wish you joy. My lady, I wish you joy——'Egad, Sir Freeman, you're the honestest fellow living——'Sdeath! I'm grown strangely airy upon this matter—My lord, how dy'e?—A word, my lord. Don't you remember something of a previous agreement, that entitles me to the moiety of this lady's fortune, which, I think, will amount to ten thousand pounds?

Aim. Not a penny, Archer. You would ha' cut my throat just now, because I would not deceive this lady.

Arch. Ay, and I'll cut your throat still, if you should deceive her now.

Aim. That's what I expect; and, to end the dispute, the lady's fortune is twenty thousand pounds; we'll divide stakes:—take the twenty thousand pounds, or the lady.

Dor. How! Is your lordship so indifferent?

Arch. No, no, no, madam; his lordship knows very well that I'll take the money: I leave you to his lordship; and so we're both provided for.

Enter FOIGARD.

Foig. Arra fait, de people do say you be all robb'd, joy.

Aim. The ladies have been in some danger, sir, as you saw.

Foig. Upon my shoul our inn be robb'd too.

Aim. Our inn! By whom?

Foig. Upon my shalvation, our landlord has robb'd himself, and run away wid de money.

Arch. Robbed himself!

Foig. Ay, fait! and me too, of a hundred pounds.

Arch. Robb'd you of a hundred pounds!

Foig. Yes, fait, honey, that I did owe to him.

Aim. Our money's gone, Frank.

Arch. Rot the money; my wench is gone—— *Sçavez vous quelque chose de Mademoiselle Cherry?*

Enter a Fellow with a strong Box and Letter.

Fell. Is there one Martin here?

Arch. Ay, ay—who wants him?

Fell. I have a box here, and a letter for him.

Arch. [*Taking the box.*] Ha, ha, ha! what's here? Leger-de-main! By this light, my lord, our money again. But this unfolds the riddle. [*Opening the letter, reads.*] Hum, hum, hum——O, 'tis for the public good, and must be communicated to the company.

'MR MARTIN,

'My father, being afraid of an impeachment by the rogues that are taken to-night, is gone off; but if you can procure him a pardon, he'll make great discoveries, that may be useful to the country. Could I have met you instead of your master to-night, I would have delivered myself into your hands, with a sum that much exceeds that in your strong box, which I have sent you, with an assurance to my dear Martin, that I shall ever be his most faithful friend, till death,

CHERRY BONIFACE.'

There's a billet-doux for you——As for the father, I think he ought to be encouraged; and for the daughter——pray, my lord, persuade your bride to take her into her service, instead of Gipsey.

Aim. I can assure you, madam, your deliverance was owing to her discovery.

Dor. Your command, my lord, will do, without the obligation. I'll take care of her.

Sir Cha. This good company meets opportunely, in favour of a design I have in behalf of my unfortunate sister. I intend to part her from her husband—Gentlemen, will you assist me?

Arch. Assist you! 'Sdeath! who would not?

Foig. Ay, upon my shoul, we'll all asshist.

Enter SULLEN.

Sul. What's all this? They tell me, spouse, that you had like to have been robb'd.

Mrs Sul. Truly, spouse, I was pretty near it—had not these two gentlemen interpos'd.

Sul. How came these gentlemen here?

Mrs Sul. That's his way of returning thanks, you must know.

Foig. Ay, but, upon my conscience, de question be a-propos, for all dat.

Sir Cha. You promis'd, last night, sir, that you would deliver your lady to me this morning.

Sul. Humph.

Arch. Humph! What do you mean by humph?—Sir, you shall deliver her——In short, sir, we have sav'd you and your family, and if you are not civil, we'll unbind the rogues, join with 'em, and set fire to your house——What does the man mean? Not part with his wife!

Foig. Arra, not part wid your wife! Upon my shoul, de man dosh not understand common shivility.

Mrs Sul. Hold, gentlemen: all things here must move by consent: compulsion would spoil us. Let my dear and I talk the matter over, and you shall judge it between us.

Sul. Let me know, first, who are to be our judges.——Pray, sir, who are you?

Sir Cha. I am Sir Charles Freeman, come to take away your wife.

Sul. And you, good sir?

Aim. Thomas, Viscount Aimwell, come to take away your sister.

Sul. And you, pray, sir?

Arch. Francis Archer, Esq., come——

Sul. To take away my mother, I hope—Gentlemen, you're heartily welcome—I never met with three more obliging people since I was born—And now, my dear, if you please, you shall have the first word.

Arch. And the last, for five pounds. [*Aside.*

Mrs Sul. Spouse.

Sul. Rib.

Mrs Sul. How long have you been married?

Sul. By the almanack, fourteen months—but by my account, fourteen years.

Mrs Sul. 'Tis thereabout, by my reckoning.

Foig. Upon my conscience, dere accounts vil agree.

Mrs Sul. Pray, spouse, what did you marry for?

Sul. To get an heir to my estate.

Sir Cha. And have you succeeded?

Sul. No.

Arch. The condition fails of his side—Pray, madam, what did you marry for?

Mrs Sul. To support the weakness of my sex by the strength of his, and to enjoy the pleasures of an agreeable society.

Sir Cha. Are your expectations answer'd?

Mrs Sul. No.

Foig. Arra, honeys, a clear caase, a clear caase!

Sir Cha. What are the bars to your mutual contentment?

Mrs Sul. In the first place, I cann't drink ale with him.

Sul. Nor can I drink tea with her.

Mrs Sul. I cann't hunt with you.

Sul. Nor can I dance with you.

Mrs Sul. I hate cocking and racing.

Sul. I abhor ombre and piquet.

Mrs Sul. Your silence is intolerable.

Sul. Your prating is worse.

Mrs Sul. Have we not been a perpetual offence to each other—a gnawing vulture at the heart?

Sul. A frightful goblin to the sight.

Mrs Sul. A porcupine to the feeling.

Sul. Perpetual wormwood to the taste.

Mrs Sul. Is there on earth a thing we can agree in?

Sul. Yes—to part.

Mrs Sul. With all my heart.

Sul. Your hand.

Mrs Sul. Here.

Sul. These hands joined us, these shall part us—Away——

Mrs Sul. East.

Sul. West.

Mrs Sul. North.

Sul. South; far as the poles asunder.

Foig. Upon my shoul, a very pretty sheremony.

Sir Cha. Now, Mr Sullen, there wants only my sister's fortune to make us easy.

Sul. Sir Charles, you love your sister, and I love her fortune: every one to his fancy.

Arch. Then you won't refund?

Sul. Not a stiver.

Arch. What is her portion?

Sir Cha. Twenty thousand pounds, sir.

Arch. I'll pay it:—my lord, I thank him, has enabled me; and if the lady pleases, she shall go home with me. This night's adventure has proved strangely lucky to us all—For Captain Gibbet, in his walk, has made bold, Mr Sullen, with your study and escritoir, and has taken out all the writings of your estate, all the articles of marriage with your lady, bills, bonds, leases, receipts, to an infinite value: I took 'em from him, and will deliver them to Sir Charles.

[*Gives him a parcel of papers and parchments.*

Sul. How! my writings!—My head aches consumedly. Well, gentlemen, you shall have her fortune, but I cann't talk. If you have a mind, Sir Charles, to be merry, and celebrate my sister's wedding, and my divorce, you may command my house!—but my head aches consumedly—Scrub, bring me a dram.

Arch. 'Twould be hard to guess which of these parties is the better pleas'd,—the couple join'd, or the couple parted; the one rejoicing in hopes of an untasted happiness, and the other in their deliverance from an experienced misery.

Both happy in their several states we find,—
These parted by consent, and those conjoin'd:
Consent, if mutual, saves the lawyer's fee;
Consent is law enough to set you free.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE FUNERAL;

OR,

GRIEF A-LA-MODE.

BY

STEELE.

PROLOGUE.

NATURE'S deserted and dramatic art,
To dazzle now the eye, has left the heart:
Gay lights and dresses, long-extended scenes,
Demons and angels moving in machines;
All that can now, or please, or fright the fair,
May be perform'd without a writer's care,
And is the skill of carpenter, not player.
Old Shakespeare's days could not thus far advance:
But what's his buskin to our ladder dance?
In the mid region a silk youth to stand,
With that unwieldy engine at command!
Gorg'd with intemperate meals while here you sit,
Well may you take activity for wit.
Fie, let confusion on such dulness seize!
Blush you're so pleas'd, as we, that so we please.
But we, still kind to your inverted sense,
Do most unnatural things once more dispense;
For, since you're still prepost'rous in delight,
Our author made, a full house to invite,
A funeral for a comedy to-night.
Nor does he fear that you will take the hint,
And let the funeral his own be meant;
No, in Old England, nothing can be won
Without a faction, good or ill be done:
To own this our frank author does not fear,
But hopes for a prevailing party here;
He knows h' has num'rous friends, nay, knows they'll shew it,
And for the fellow-soldier save the poet.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Lord BRUMPTON.
Lord HARDY, *Son to Lord Brumpton.*
Mr CAMPLEY.
Mr TRUSTY, *Steward to Lord Brumpton.*
CABINET.
Mr SABLE, *an Undertaker.*
PUZZLE, *a Lawyer.*
TRIM, *Servant to Lord Hardy.*
TOM, *the Lawyer's Clerk.*

WOMEN.

Lady BRUMPTON.
Lady CHARLOTTE, *an Orphan, Ward to Lord Brumpton.*
Lady HARRIOT, *her Sister.*
Mademoiselle D'EPINGLE.
TATTLEAID.
Mrs FARDINGALE.
KATE MATCHLOCK.
Visitant Ladies, SABLE'S *Servants, Recruits, &c.*

SCENE,—*Covent-Garden.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Enter CABINET, SABLE, *and* CAMPLEY.

Cab. I burst into laughter. I cann't bear to see writ over an undertaker's door,—Dresses for the dead, and necessaries for funerals!—ha, ha, ha!

Sab. Well, sir, 'tis very well: I know you are of the laughers, the wits, that take the liberty to deride all things that are magnificent and solemn.

Cab. But is it not strangely contradictory, that men can come to so open, so apparent an hypocrisy, as, in the face of all the world, to hire professed mourners to grieve, lament, and follow, in their stead, the nearest relations, and suborn others to do by art what they themselves should be prompted to by nature.

Sab. Alas! sir, the value of all things under the sun is merely fantastic.—We run, we strive, and purchase things with our blood and money, quite foreign to our intrinsic real happiness, and which have a being in imagination only, as you may see by the pother that is made about precedence, titles, court-favours, maidenheads, and china-ware.

Camp. Ay, Mr Sable, but all those are objects that promote our joy, are bright to the eye, or stamp upon our minds pleasure and self-satisfaction.

Sab. You are extremely mistaken—and there is often nothing more inwardly distress'd, than a young bride in her glittering retinue, or deeply joyful, than a young widow in her weeds and black train; of both which the lady of this house may be an instance; for she has been the one, and *is*, I'll be sworn, the other.

Cab. You talk, Mr Sable, most learnedly.

Sab. I have the deepest learning, sir,—experience. Remember your widow cousin, that married last month.

Cab. Ay, but how could you imagine she was in all that grief an hypocrite? Could all those shrieks, those swoonings, that rising falling bosom be constrained? You're uncharitable, Sable, to believe it. What colour, what reason had you for it?

Sab. But, as for her, nothing, she resolv'd, that look'd bright or joyous should, after her love's death, approach her. All her servants that were not coal-black must turn out; a fair complexion made her eyes and heart ache; she'd none but downright jet; and, to exceed all example, she hir'd my mourning furniture by the year, and, in case of my mortality, ty'd my son to the same article; so in six weeks time ran away with a young fellow.—Pr'ythee, push on briskly, Mr Cabinet; now is your time to have this widow; for Tattleaid tells me she always said she'd never marry.

Cab. As you say, that's generally the most hopeful sign.

Sab. I tell you, sir, 'tis an infallible one: You know those professions are only to introduce discourse of matrimony and young fellows.

Cab. But I swear I could not have confidence, ev'n after all our long acquaintance, and the mutual love which his lordship (who, indeed, has now been so kind as to leave us) has so long interrupted, to mention a thing of such a nature so unseasonably.

Sab. Unseasonably! Why, I tell you, 'tis the only season, (granting her sorrow unfeigned.) When would you speak of passion, but in the midst of passions? There's a what d'ye call a crisis—The lucky minute, that's so talk'd of, is a moment between joy and grief, which you must take hold of, and push your fortune. But get you in, and you'll best read your fate in the reception Mrs Tattleaid gives you: All she says, and all she does, nay, her very love and hatred are mere repetitions of her ladyship's passions. I'll say that for her, she's a true lady's woman, and is herself as much a second-hand thing as her clothes. But I must beg your pardon, sir; my people are come, I see. [*Exeunt* CAB. *and* CAMP. *Enter* SABLE'S *Men.*]—Where, in the name of goodness, have you all been? Have you brought the saw-dust and tar, for embalming? Have you the hangings and the sixpenny nails, and my lord's coat of arms?

Enter Servant.

Serv. Yes, sir, and had come sooner, but I went to the herald's for a coat for Alderman Gathergrease, that died last night——he has promised to invent one against to-morrow.

Sab. Ah! pox take some of our cits; the first thing after their death is to take care of their birth——pox! let him bear a pair of stockings; he is the first of his family that ever wore one. Well, come, you that are to be mourners in this house, put on your sad looks, and walk by me, that I may sort you. Ha, you! a little more upon the dismal. [*Forming their countenances.*]—This fellow has a good mortal look—place him near the corpse;—that wainscot face must be o' top of the stairs;—that fellow almost in a fright (that looks as if he were full of some strange misery) at the entrance of the hall—So—but I'll fix you all myself—Let's have no laughing now, on any provocation. [*Makes faces.*] Look yonder, that hale, well-looking puppy! You ungrateful scoundrel, did not I pity you, take you out of a great man's service, and shew you the pleasure of receiving wages? Did not I give you ten, then fifteen, now twenty shillings a week, to be sorrowful? and the more I give you, I think, the gladder you are.

Enter a Boy.

Boy. Sir, the grave-digger of St Timothy's in the Fields would speak with you.

Sab. Let him come in.

Enter Grave-digger.

Grav. I carried home to your house the shroud the gentleman was buried in last night: I could not get his ring off very easily, therefore I brought you the finger and all: and, sir, the sexton gives his service to you, and desires to know whether you'd have any bodies remov'd or not: if not, he'll let them lie in their graves a week longer.

Sab. Give him my service.

Enter GOODY TRASH.

I wonder, Goody Trash, you could not be more punctual, when I told you I wanted you, and your two daughters, to be three virgins to-night, to stand in white about my lady Catherine Grissel's body; and you know you were privately to bring her home from the man-midwife's, where she died in child-birth, to be buried like a maid:—but there is nothing minded. Well, I have put off that till to-morrow. Go, and get your bags of brick-dust and your whiting; go, and sell to the cook-maids; know who is surfeited about town; bring me no bad news,—none of your recoveries again. [*Exit* GOODY TRASH.] And you, Mr Blockhead, I warrant you have not call'd at Mr Pestle's the apothecary.—Will that fellow never pay me? I stand bound for all the poison in that starving murderer's shop! He serves me just as Dr Quibus did, who promised to write a treatise against water-gruel, a damn'd healthy slop, that has done me more injury than all the faculty. Look you now, you are all upon the sneer: let me have none but downright stupid countenances—I've a good mind to turn you all off, and take people out of the play-house; but, hang them, they are as ignorant of their parts as you are of yours: they never act but when they speak; when the chief indication of the mind is in the gesture, or, indeed, in case of sorrow, in no gesture, except you were to act a widow, or so—but yours, you dolts, is all in dumb show, dumb show. I mean expressive elegant show: as who can see such an horrid ugly phiz as that fellow's, and not be shocked, offended, and killed of all joy while he beholds it? But we must not loiter—Ye stupid rogues, whom I have picked out of the rubbish of mankind, and fed for your eminent worthlessness, attend, and know that I speak you this moment stiff and immutable to all sense of noise, mirth, or laughter. [*Makes mouths at them as they pass by him, to bring them to a constant countenance.*] So:—they are pretty well—pretty well. [*Exeunt.*

Enter TRUSTY *and* Lord BRUMPTON.

Trusty. 'Twas fondness, sir, and tender duty to you, who have been so worthy and so just a master to me, made me stay near you: they left me so, and there I found you wake from your lethargic slumber; on which I will assume an authority to beseech you, sir, to make just use of your revived life, in seeing who are your true friends, and knowing her who has so wrought upon your noble nature, as to make it act against itself, in disinheriting your brave son.

L. Brump. Sure, 'tis impossible she should be such a creature as you tell me—My mind reflects upon ten thousand endearments that plead unanswerably for her;—her chaste reluctant love, her easy observance of all my wayward humours, to which she would accommodate herself with so much ease, I could scarce observe it was a virtue in her; she hid her very patience.

Trusty. It was all art, sir, or indifference to you; for what I say is downright matter of fact.

L. Brump. Why didst thou ever tell me it? or why not in my life-time? for I must call it so; nor can I date a minute mine, after her being false: all past that moment is death and darkness.—Why didst thou not tell me then, I say?

Trusty. Because you were too much in love with her to be inform'd. I must, I will conjure you to be conceal'd, and but contain yourself in hearing one discourse with that cursed instrument of all her secrets, that Tattleaid, and you will see what I tell you; you will call me then your guardian and good genius.

L. Brump. Well, you shall govern me; but would I had died in earnest ere I had known it: my head swims, as it did when I fell into my fit, at the thoughts of it.—All human life's a mere vertigo!

Trusty. Ay, ay, my lord, fine reflections, fine reflections; but that does no business. Thus, sir, we'll stand concealed, and hear, I doubt not, a much sincerer dialogue than usual between vicious persons; for a late accident has given a little jealousy, which makes them over-act their love and confidence in each other. [*They retire.*

Enter Widow and TATTLEAID, *meeting, and running to each other.*

Wid. Oh, Tattleaid! his and our hour is come!

Tat. I always said, by his church-yard cough, you'd bury him, but still you were impatient.

Wid. Nay, thou hast ever been my comfort, my confidant, my friend, and my servant: and now I'll reward thy pains; for tho' I scorn the whole sex of fellows, I'll give them hopes for thy sake:—every smile, every frown, every gesture, humour, caprice, and whimsy of mine shall be gold to thee, girl; thou shalt feel all the sweets and wealth of being a fine rich widow's woman. Oh! how my head runs my first year out, and jumps to all the joys of widowhood! If, thirteen months hence, a friend should haul one to a play one has a mind to see, what pleasure 'twill be, when my lady Brumpton's footman's called, who kept a place for that very purpose, to make a sudden insurrection of fine wigs in the pit and side-boxes. Then, with a pretty sorrow in one's face, and a willing blush, for being stared at, one ventures to look round, and bow to one of one's own quality. Thus [*very directly*] to a snug pretending fellow of no fortune. Thus [*as scarce seeing him*] to one that writes lampoons. Thus [*fearfully*] to one one really loves. Thus [*looking down*] to one woman acquaintance. From box to box thus, [*with looks differently familiar.*] Then the serenades! the lovers!

Tat. Oh, madam, you make my heart bound within me. I'll warrant you, madam, I'll manage them all; and, indeed, madam, the men are really very silly creatures: 'tis no such hard matter—They rulers! they governors! I warrant you, indeed!

Wid. Ay, Tattleaid, they imagine themselves mighty things. I laugh to see men go on our errands, strut in great offices, live in cares, hazards, and scandals, to come home and be fools to us, in brags of their dispatches, and negociations, and their wisdoms—as my good dear deceas'd used to entertain me; which I to relieve myself from—would lisp some silly request, pat him on the face——He shakes his head at my pretty folly, calls me simpleton, gives me a jewel, then goes to bed, so wise, so satisfied, and so deceived.

Tat. But I protest, madam, I've always wonder'd how you could accomplish my young lord's being disinherited.

Wid. Why, Tatty, you must know, my late lord—How prettily that sounds:—My late lord!—But, I say, my late lord's foible was generosity—I press'd him there; and whenever you, by my order, bad told him stories to my son-in-law's disadvantage, in his rage and resentment, I (whose interest lay otherwise) always fell on my knees to implore his pardon, and, with tears, sighs, and importunities for him, prevailed against him: Besides this, you know I had, when I pleased, fits.—Fits are a mighty help in the government of a good-natured man.

Tat. O, rare, madam! Your ladyship's a great head-piece: but now, dear madam, is the hard task, if I may take the liberty to say it—to enjoy all freedoms, and seem to abstain: but now, madam, a fine young gentleman, with a red coat, that dances——

Wid. You may be sure the happy man (if it be in fate that there is a happy man, to make me an unhappy woman) shall not be an old one again:—but the day is now my own—Yet, now I think on't, Tattleaid, be sure to keep an obstinate shyness to all our old acquaintance.

Tat. Ay, madam—I believe, madam—I speak, madam, but my humble sense—Mr Cabinet would marry you.

Wid. Marry me! No, Tattleaid, he that is so mean as to marry a woman after an affair with her, will be so base as to upbraid that very weakness.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. A gentleman to Mrs Tattleaid.

[*Exit* TAT.

Wid. Go to him.—Bless me! how careless and open have I been to this subtle creature in the case of Cabinet; she's certainly in his interests. How miserable it is to have one one hates always about one; and when one cann't endure one's own reflection upon some actions, who can bear the thoughts of another upon them? But she has me by deep secrets.

Enter TATTLEAID.

Tat. Madam, Counsellor Puzzle is come to wait on your ladyship, about the will and the conveyance of the estate—there must, it seems, be no time lost, for fear of things. Fie, fie, madam, you a widow these three hours, and not look'd on a parchment yet—Oh, impious! to neglect the will of the dead!

Wid. As you say, indeed, there is no will of a husband's so willingly obeyed as his last. But I must go in, and receive him in my formalities: leaning on a couch is a necessary posture, as his going behind his desk when he speaks to a client—But do you bring him in hither till I am ready. [*Exit.*

Tat. Mr Counsellor, Mr Counsellor!

[*Calling.*

Enter PUZZLE *and Clerk.*

Puz. Servant, good Madam Tattleaid.—My ancient friend is gone, but business must be minded.

Tat. I told my lady twice or thrice, as she lies in dumb grief on the couch within, that you were here, but she regarded me not; however, since you say it is of such moment, I'll venture to introduce you. Please but to repose here a little, while I step in; for, methinks, I would a little prepare her.

Puz. Alas! alas! poor lady!

[*Exit* TATTLEAID.

Damn'd hypocrites!—Well, this nobleman's death is a little sudden; therefore, pray let me recollect:—Open the bag, good Tom. Now, Tom, thou art my nephew, my dear sister Kate's only son, and my heir, therefore I will conceal from thee, on no occasion, any thing; for I would enter thee into business as soon as possible. Know then, child, that the lord of this house was one of your men of honour and sense, who lose the latter in the former, and are apt to take all men to be like themselves: now this gentleman entirely trusted me, and I made the only use a man of business can of a trust—I cheated him; for I imperceptibly, before his face, made his whole estate liable to an hundred per annum for myself, for good services, &c. As for legacies, they are good or not, as I please; for, let me tell you, a man must take pen, ink, and paper, sit down by an old fellow, and pretend to take directions, but a true lawyer never makes any man's will but his own; and as the priest of old, among us, got near the dying man, and gave all to the church, so now the lawyer gives all to the law.

Clerk. Ay, sir, but priests then cheated the nation by doing their offices in an unknown language.

Puz. True—but ours is a way much surer; for we cheat in no language at all, but loll in our own coaches, elegant in gibberish, and learned in jingle.—Pull out the parchment:—There's the deed; I made it as long as I could——Well, I hope to see the day when the indenture shall be the exact measure of the land that passes by it; for 'tis a discouragement to the gown, that every ignorant

rogue of an heir should, in a word or two, understand his father's meaning, and hold ten acres of land by half an acre of parchment—Nay, I hope to see the time when that there is indeed some progress made in, shall be wholly effected, and, by the improvement of the noble art of tautology, every inn in Holborn an inn of court. Let others think of logic, rhetoric, and I know not what impertinence, but mind thou tautology—What's the first excellence in a lawyer? Tautology. What's the second? Tautology. What's the third? Tautology; as an old pleader said of action. But to turn to the deed—[*Pulls out an immeasurable parchment*] for the will is of no force, if I please, for he was not capable of making one after the former, as I managed it—upon which account I now wait on my lady.—By the way, Tom, do you know the true meaning of the word a deed?

Clerk. Ay, sir, as if a man should say the deed.

Puz. Right; 'tis emphatically so called, because after it all deeds and actions are of no effect, and you have nothing to do but hang yourself—the only obliging thing you can then do. But I was telling you the use of tautology—Read towards the middle of that instrument.

Clerk. [*Reads.*] I, the said Earl of Brumpton, do give, bestow, grant, and bequeath, over and above the said premises, all the site and capital messuage called by the name of Oatham, and all out-houses, barns, stables, and other edifices and buildings, yards, orchards, gardens, fields, arbors, trees, lands, earths, meadows, greens, pastures, feedings, woods, under-woods, ways, waters, watercourses, fishing-ponds, pools, commons, common of pasture, paths, heath-thickets, profits, commodities, and emoluments, with their and every of their appurtenances whatsoever, to the said capital messuage and site belonging, or in any wise appertaining, or with the same heretofore used, occupied, or enjoyed, accepted, executed, known, or taken as part, parcel, or member of the same; containing in the whole, by estimation, four hundred acres of the large measure, or thereabouts, be the same more or less: all and singular which the said site, capital messuage, and other the premises, with their and every of their appurtenances, are situate, lying, and being—

[PUZZLE *nods and sneers as the synonymous words are repeating, whom* L. BRUMPTON *scornfully mimics.*

Puz. Hold, hold, good Tom; you do come on indeed in business, but do'nt use your nose enough in reading—[*Reads in a ridiculous low tone, till out of breath.*]—Why, you're quite out: you read to be understood—let me see it—I, the said earl——Now, again, suppose this were to be in Latin—[*Runs into Latin terminations.*] Making Latin is only making it no English——*Ego præ-dict——Comes de Brumpton——totas meas barnos—out-housas et stabulas—yardos*——But there needs no further perusal. I now recollect the whole—My lord, by this instrument, disinherits his son utterly, gives all to my lady, and, moreover, grants the guardianship of two fortune wards to her—*id est*, to be sold by her, which is the subject of my business to her ladyship, who, methinks, a little over-does the affair of grief, in letting me wait thus long on such welcome articles ——But here———

Enter TATTLEAID, *wiping her eyes.*

Tat. I have, in vain, done all I can to make her regard me. Pray, Mr Puzzle, you're a man of sense, come in yourself, and speak reason, to bring her to some consideration of herself, if possible.

Puz. Tom, I'll come down to the hall to you.—Dear madam, lead on.

[*Exit Clerk one way,* PUZZLE *and* TATTLEAID *another.*

[LORD BRUMPTON *and* TRUSTY *advance from their concealment, after a long pause, and staring at each other.*]

L. Brump. Trusty, on thy sincerity, on thy fidelity to me, thy friend, thy patron, and thy master, answer me directly to one question—Am I really alive? Am I that identical, that numerical, that very same Lord Brumpton, that—

Trusty. That very lord—that very Lord Brumpton, the very generous, honest, and good Lord Brumpton, who spent his strong and riper years with honour and reputation:—that very Lord Brumpton who buried a fine lady, who brought him a fine son, who is a fine gentleman; but, in his age, that very man, unseasonably captivated with youth and beauty, married a very fine young lady, who has dishonoured his bed, disinherited his brave son, and dances o'er his grave.

L. Brump. Oh, that damn'd tautologist too!—That Puzzle, and his irrevocable deed.—[*Pausing.*]—Well, I know I do not really live, but wander o'er the place where once I had a treasure ——I'll haunt her, Trusty, gaze in that false beauteous face, till she trembles, till she looks pale, nay, till she blushes.

Trusty. Ay, ay, my lord, you speak a ghost very much; there's flesh and blood in that expression—that false beauteous face!

L. Brump. Then, since you see my weakness, be a friend, and arm me with all your care and all your reason.

Trusty. If you'll condescend to let me direct you, you shall cut off this rotten limb, this false, disloyal wife, and save your noble parts,—your son, your family, your honour.

Short is the date in which ill acts prevail,
But honesty's a rock can never fail. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Enter Lord HARDY.

L. Hardy. Now, indeed, I am utterly undone ——but to expect an evil softens the weight of it when it happens; and pain, no more than pleasure, is in reality so great as in expectation. But what will become of me?—How shall I keep myself even above worldly want?—Shall I live at home, a stiff, melancholy, poor man of quality; grow uneasy to my acquaintance, as well as myself, by fancying I am slighted where I am not; with all the thousand particularities which attend those whom low fortune and high spirit make malcontents? No!—We have a brave prince on the throne, whose commission I bear, and a glorious war, in an honest cause, approaching, [*Clapping his hand on his sword*] in which this shall cut out bread for me, and may, perhaps, equal that estate to which my birth entitled me ———But what to do in present pressures—Ha, Trim! [*Calling.*

Enter TRIM.

Trim. My lord!

L. Hardy. How do the poor rogues that are to recruit my company?

Trim. Do, sir! They have eat you to your last guinea.

L. Hardy. Were you at the agent's?

Trim. Yes.

L. Hardy. Well, and how?

Trim. Why, sir, for your arrears you may have eleven shillings in the pound; but he'll not touch your growing subsistence under three shillings in the pound interest; besides which, you must let his clerk, Jonathan Item, swear the peace against you, to keep you from duelling, or insure your life, which you may do for eight per cent. On these terms he'll oblige you, which he would not do for any body else in the regiment; but he has a friendship for you.

L. Hardy. Oh, I am his humble servant! but he must have his own terms; we cann't starve, nor must the fellows want. But methinks this is a calm midnight:—I have heard no duns today.

Trim. Duns, my lord! Why, now your father's dead, and they cann't arrest you, I shall grow a little less upon the smooth with them than I have been. Why, friend, says I, how often must I tell you my lord is not stirring? His lordship has not slept well; you must come some other time: your lordship will send for him when you are at leisure to look upon money affairs: or, if they are so saucy, so impertinent as to press a man of your quality for their own, there are canes, there's Bridewell, there's the stocks for your ordinary tradesmen; but to an haughty, thriving, Covent-Garden mercer, silk, or lace-man, your lordship gives your most humble service to him, hopes his wife is well; you have letters to write, or you would see him yourself: but you desire he would be with you punctually on such a day, that is to say, the day after you are gone out of town.

L. Hardy. Go, sirrah; you are scurrilous: I won't believe there are such men of quality—D'ye hear, give my service, this afternoon, to Mr Cutpurse, the agent, and tell him I am obliged to pay him for his readiness to serve me, for I am resolved to pay my debts forthwith.

[*A voice without.*] I don't know whether he is within or not. Mr Trim, is my lord within?

L. Hardy. Trim, see who it is: I am not within, you know. [*Exit* TRIM.

Trim. [*Without.*] Yes, sir, my lord is above; pray walk up.

L. Hardy. Who can it be? he owns me too.—

Enter CAMPLEY *and* TRIM.

Dear Tom Campley, this is kind—You are an extraordinary man, indeed, who, in the sudden accession of a noble fortune, can still be yourself, and visit your less happy friends.

Camp. No, you are, my lord, the extraordinary man, who, on the loss of an almost princely fortune, can be master of a temper that makes you the envy, rather than pity of your more fortunate, not more happy friends.

L. Hardy. Oh, sir, your servant!—But let me gaze on thee a little——I ha'n't seen thee since we came home into England.—Most exactly, negligently, genteelly dressed.—I know there is more than ordinary in this. [*Beating* CAMPLEY'S *breast.*] Come, confess who shares with me here.—I must have her real and poetical name——Come, she is in sonnet, Cynthia; in prose, Mistress———

Camp. One you little dream of, though she is, in a manner, of your placing there.

L. Hardy. My placing there!

Camp. Why, my lord, all the fine things you have said to me in the camp, of my lady Charlotte, your father's ward, ran in my head so very much, that I made it my business to become acquainted in that family, which I did by Mr Cabinet's means, and am now in love in the same place with your lordship.

L. Hardy. How! in love in the same place with me, Mr Campley?

Camp. Ay, my lord, with t'other sister, with t'other sister.

L. Hardy. What a dunce was I, not to know which, without your naming her? Why, thou art the only man breathing fit to deal with her——But my lady Charlotte; there's a woman!——

so easily virtuous, so agreeably severe; her motion so unaffected, yet so composed; her lips breathe nothing but truth, good sense, and flowing wit.

Camp. Lady Harriot:—there's the woman! Her lips are made of gum and balm—There is something in that dear girl that fires my blood above—above—above—

L. Hardy. Above what?

Camp. A grenadier's march.

L. Hardy. A soft simile, I must confess—But, oh! that Charlotte! to recline this aching head, full of care, on that tender, snowy, faithful bosom.

Camp. Oh! that Harriot! to embrace that beauteous———

L. Hardy. Ay, Tom; but methinks your head runs too much on the wedding-night only, to make your happiness lasting: mine is fixed on the married state:—I expect my felicity from Lady Charlotte, in her friendship, her constancy, her piety, her household cares, her maternal tenderness——But tell me, I wonder how you make your approaches in besieging such a sort of creature; she that loves addresses, gallantry, fiddles; that reigns and delights in a crowd of admirers. If I know her, she is one of those you may easily have a general acquaintance with, but hard to make particular.

Camp. You understand her very well—You must know, I put her out of all her play, by carrying it in a humorous manner: I took care, in all my actions, before I discovered the lover, that she should, in general, have a good opinion of me; so that she is now extremely at a loss how to throw me, from the familiarity of an acquaintance, into the distance of a lover; but I laugh her out of it: when she begins to frown and look grave at my mirth, I mimic her till she bursts out a laughing.

L. Hardy. That's ridiculous enough.

Camp. By Cabinet's interest over my lady Brumpton, with gold and flattery to Mrs Fardingale, an old maid her ladyship has placed about the young ladies, I have easy access at all times, and am this very day to be admitted by her into their apartment——I have found, you must know, that she is my relation.

L. Hardy. Her ladyship has chose an odd companion for young ladies.

Camp. Oh, my lady's a politician: she told Tattleaid, one day, that an old maid was the best guard for young ones; for they, like eunuchs in a seraglio, are vigilant out of envy of enjoyment they cannot themselves arrive at. But, as I was saying, I have sent my cousin Fardingale a song, which she and I are to practise to the spinet—The young ladies will be by, and I am to be left alone with Lady Harriot. If you'll meet me at Toms', have a letter ready; I will, myself, deliver it to your mistress, conduct you into the house, and tell her you are there, and find means to place you together. You must march under my command to-day, as I have many a one under yours.

L. Hardy. But, faith, Tom, I shall not behave myself with half the resolution you have under mine; for, to confess my weakness, though I know she loves me, though I know she is stedfastly mine, as her heart can make her, I know not how, when I am near her, that my tongue falters, my nerves shake, and my heart so alternately sinks and rises, that my pre-meditated resolves vanish into confusion, down-cast eyes, and broken utterance.

Camp. Ha, ha, ha! this is a campaigner too! Why, my lord, that's the condition Harriot would have me in, and then she thinks she could have me; but I, that know her better than she does herself—But I shall make her no such sacrifice. 'Tis well my lady Charlotte's a woman of so solid an understanding: I don't know another that would not use you ill for your high value.

L. Hardy. But, Tom, I must see your song you have sent your cousin Fardingale, as you call her.

Camp. This is lucky enough—[*Aside.*]—No, hang it, my lord, a man makes so silly a figure when his verses are reading—Trim, thou hast not left off thy loving and thy rhyming:—Trim's a critic: I remember him a servitor at Oxon. [*Giving a paper to* TRIM.] I give myself into his hands, because you sha'n't see them till I am gone—— My lord, your servant—you sha'n't stir.

L. Hardy. Nor you neither, then. [*Struggling.*

Camp. You will be obeyed.

[*Exeunt; Lord* HARDY *waits on him down.*

Trim. What is in this song—Ha!—Don't my eyes deceive me?—A bill of three hundred pounds! [*Reads.*

'Mr Cash,

'Pray, pay to Mr William Trim, or bearer, the sum of three hundred pounds, and place it to the account of Sir,

Your humble servant,

THOMAS CAMPLEY.'

[*Pulling off his hat, and bowing.*] Your very humble servant, good Mr Campley. Ay, this is poetry; this is a song, indeed—Faith, I'll set it, and sing it myself——Pray, pay to Mr William Trim——so far in recitative——Three hundred—[*Singing ridiculously.*]—hun—dred—hundred——Hundred thrice repeated, because 'tis three hundred pounds: I love repetitions in music, when there is a good reason for it——Po——ds, after the Italian manner. If they would bring me such sensible words as these, I would outstrip all your composers for the music prize. This was honestly done of Mr Campley; though I have carried him many a purse from my master, when he was ensign to our company in Flanders.—

Re-enter Lord HARDY.

My lord, I am your lordship's humble servant.

L. Hardy. Sir, your humble servant. But, pray, my good familiar friend, how came you to be so very much my humble servant all of a sudden?

Trim. I beg pardon, dear sir:—My lord, I am not your humble servant.

L. Hardy. No!

Trim. Yes, my lord, I am; but not as you

mean—but I am—I am, my lord——In short, I am overjoyed.

L. Hardy. Overjoyed! thou art distracted——What ails the fellow? Where is Campley's song?

Trim. Oh, my lord, one would not think it was in him! Mr Campley is really a very great poet—As for the song, it is only as they all end in rhyme—owe, woe; isses, kisses; boy, joy—but, my lord, the other in long heroic blank verse.—[*Reading it with a great tone.*] Pray, pay to Mr William Trim, or order, the sum of——How sweetly it runs!—Pactolian guineas chink in every line.

L. Hardy. How very handsomely this was done in Campley! I wondered, indeed, he was so willing to shew his verses. In how careless a manner that fellow does the greatest actions!

Trim. My lord, pray, my lord, sha'n't I go immediately to Cutpurse's?

L. Hardy. No, sirrah; now we have no occasion for it.

Trim. No, my lord, only to stare him full in the face after I have received this money, not say a word, but keep my hat on, and walk out; or, perhaps, not hear, if any I meet with speak to me, but grow stiff, deaf, and short-sighted to all my old acquaintance, like a sudden rich man, as I am; or, perhaps, my lord, desire Cutpurse's clerk to let me leave fifty pounds at their house, payable to Mr William Trim, or order—till I come that way—or, a month or two hence, may have occasion for it—I don't know what bills may be drawn upon me——Then, when the clerk begins to stare at me, till he pulls the great goose quill from behind his ear, [*Pulls a handful of farthings out*] I fall a-reckoning the pieces, as I do these farthings.

L. Hardy. Well, sirrah, you may have your humour, but be sure you take fourscore pounds, and pay my debts immediately—if you meet any officer you ever see me in company with, that looks grave at Cutpurse's house, tell him I'll speak with him—We must help our friends—But learn moderation, you rogue, in your good fortune.—Be at home all the evening after, while I wait at Toms' to meet Campley, in order to see Lady Charlotte.

My good or ill in her alone is found,
And in that thought all other cares are drown'd.
[*Exit.*

Trim. Oh dear, dear, three hundred pounds!
[*Exit.*

Enter SABLE, *Lord* BRUMPTON, *and* TRUSTY.

Sab. Why, my lord, you cann't in conscience put me off so: I must do according to my orders,—cut you up and embalm you, except you'll come down a little deeper than you talk of:—You don't consider the charges I've been at already.

L. Brump. Charges! for what?

Sab. First, twenty guineas to my lady's woman, for notice of your death, (a fee I've before now known the widow herself go halves in;) but no matter for that—in the next place, ten pounds for watching you all your long fit of sickness last winter——

L. Brump. Watching me! Why, I had none but by own servants by turns.

Sab. I mean, attending to give notice of your death. I had, all your long fit of sickness, last winter, at half-a-crown a-day, a fellow waiting at your gate to bring me intelligence; but you unfortunately recovered, and I lost all my obliging pains for your service.

L. Brump. Ha, ha, ha! Sable, thou'rt a very impudent fellow. Half-a-crown a-day to attend my decease! and dost thou reckon it to me?

Sab. Look you, gentlemen, don't stand staring at me—I have a book at home, which I call my Dooms-day Book, where I have every man of quality's age and distemper in town, and know when you should drop——Nay, my lord, if you had reflected upon your mortality, half so much as poor I have for you, you would not desire to return to life thus——in short, I cannot keep this a secret, under the whole money I am to have for burying you.

L. Brump. Trusty, if you think it safe in you to obey my orders after the deed Puzzle told his clerk of, pay it him.

Trusty. I should be glad to give it out of my own pocket, rather than be without the satisfaction of seeing you witness to it.

L. Brump. I heartily believe thee, dear Trusty.

Sab. Then, my lord, the secret of your being alive is now safe with me.

Trusty. I'll warrant I'll be reveng'd of this unconscionable dog.—[*Aside.*]——My lord, you must to your closet——I fear somebody's coming.

[*Exeunt* SAB. *one way, and L.* BRUMPT. *and* TRUSTY *another.*

SCENE II—*Draws, and discovers Lady* CHARLOTTE *reading at a Table; Lady* HARRIOT *playing at a glass to and fro, and viewing herself.*

L. Har. Nay, good sage sister, you may as well talk to me [*Looking at herself as she speaks*] as sit staring at a book, which I know you cann't attend——Good Dr Lucas may have writ there what he pleases, but there's no putting Francis, Lord Hardy, now Earl of Brumpton, out of your head, or making him absent from your eyes. Do but look on me now, and deny it if you can.

L. Char. You are the maddest girl—[*Smiling.*

L. Har. Look ye, I knew you could not say it and forbear laughing—[*Looking over* CHARLOTTE.]—Oh, I see his name as plain as you do—F—r—a—n, Fran, c—i—s, cis, Francis: 'tis in every line of the book.

L. Char. [*Rising.*] 'Tis in vain, I see, to mind any thing in such impertinent company—but granting 'twere as you say, as to my Lord Hardy, 'tis more excusable to admire another than one's self.

L. Har. No, I think not—Yes, I grant you, than really to be vain at one's person; but I don't admire myself——Pish! I don't believe my eyes have that softness—[*Looking in the glass.*] They a'n't so piercing: no; 'tis only stuff; the men will be talking——Some people are such admirers of teeth—Lord, what signifies teeth! [*Shewing her*

teeth.] A very black-a-moor has as white teeth as I—No, sister, I don't admire myself, but I've a spirit of contradiction in me—You don't know I'm in love with myself, only to rival the men.

L. Char. Ay, but Mr Campley will gain ground ev'n of that rival of his, your dear self.

L. Har. Oh! what have I done to you, that you should name that insolent intruder—A confident, opinionative fop—No, indeed: if I am, as a poetical lover of mine sighed and sung of both sexes—

The public envy, and the public care,

I sha'n't be so easily catched—I thank him—I want but to be sure I should heartily torment him, by banishing him, and then consider whether he should depart this life or not.

L. Char. Indeed, sister, to be serious with you, this vanity in your humour does not at all become you.

L. Har. Vanity! All the matter is, we gay people are more sincere than you wise folks:—all your life's an art—Speak your soul—Look you there—[*Hauling her to the glass.*] Are you not struck with a secret pleasure, when you view that bloom in your look, that harmony in your shape, that promptitude of your mien?

L. Char. Well, simpleton, if I am at first so silly as to be a little taken with myself, I know it a fault, and take pains to correct it.

L. Har. Pshaw! pshaw! talk this musty tale to old Mrs Fardingale; 'tis too soon for me to think at that rate.

L. Char. They that think it too soon to understand themselves, will very soon find it too—But tell me honestly, don't you like Campley?

L. Har. The fellow is not to be abhorred, if the forward thing did not think of getting me so easily—Oh, I hate a heart I cann't break when I please—What makes the value of dear china, but that 'tis so brittle?—Were it not for that, you might as well have stone mugs in your closet.

L. Char. Hist, hist, here's Fardingale.

Enter FARDINGALE.

Far. Lady Harriot, Lady Charlotte—I'll entertain you now:—I've a new song, just come hot out of the poet's brain. Lady Charlotte, my cousin Campley writ it, and it's set to a pretty air, I warrant you.

L. Har. 'Tis like to be pretty indeed, of his writing. [*Flings away.*

Far. Come, come, this is not one of your tringham trangham witty things, that your poor poets write: no; 'tis well known my cousin Campley has two thousand pounds a-year——But this is all dissimulation in you.

L. Char. 'Tis so indeed; for your cousin's song is very pretty, Mrs Fardingale. [*Reads.*

Let not love on me bestow
Soft distress and tender woe;
Then, pr'ythee give me, gentle boy,
None of thy grief, but all thy joy.

But Harriot thinks that a little unreasonable, to expect one without enduring t'other.

Enter Servant.

Serv. There's your cousin Campley to wait on you without.

Far. Let him come in——We shall have the song now.

Enter CAMPLEY.

Camp. Ladies, your most obedient servant—Your servant, Lady Charlotte—servant, Lady Harriot. [HARRIOT *looks grave upon him.*] What's the matter, dear Lady Harriot—Not well? I protest to you I'm mightily concerned—[*Pulls out a bottle.*] This is a most excellent spirit—snuff it up, madam.

L. Har. Pish! the familiar coxcomb frets me heartily.

Camp. 'Twill be over, I hope, immediately.

L. Char. Your cousin Fardingale has shewn us some of your poetry.

Camp. You should not have called it my poetry.

Far. Who waits there—Pray bring my lute out of the next room—[*Enter Servant, with a lute.*] You must know I conn'd this song before I came in, and find it will go to an excellent air of old Mr Law's, who was my mother's intimate acquaintance:—my mother's! what do I talk of? I mean my grand-mother's—Oh, here's the lute—Cousin Campley, hold the song upon your hat. [*Aside to him.*] 'Tis a pretty gallantry to a relation. [*Sings and squalls.*

Let not love, &c.

Oh, I have left off these things many a day.

Camp. No;—but you are not assured enough—Take it higher—[*In her own squall.*]—Thus—I know your voice will bear it.

L. Har. Oh, hideous! Oh, the gross flatterer—I shall burst—Mrs Fardingale, pray go on; the music fits the words most aptly—Take it higher, as your cousin advises.

Far. Oh, dear madam, do you really like it—I do purely to please you—for I cann't sing, alas!

L. Char. We know it, good madam, we know it—But pray—

Far. Let not love, and substantial blisses, is lively enough, and ran accordingly in the tune. [*Courtesies to the company.*] Now I took it higher.

L. Har. Incomparably done! Nothing can equal it, except your cousin sang his own poetry.

Camp. Madam, from my lord Hardy—[*Delivers a letter to Lady* CHARLOTTE.] How do you say, my lady Harriot; except I sing it myself! Then I assure you I will.

L. Char. I ha'n't patience: I must go read my letter. [*Exit.*

Far. Bless me! what's become of Lady Charlotte? [*Exit.*

L. Har. Mrs Fardingale, Mrs Fardingale, what, must we lose you? [CAMPLEY *runs to the door, takes the key out, and locks her in.*] What means

this insolence?—A plot upon me. Do you know who I am?

Camp. Yes, madam; you're my lady Harriot Lovely, with ten thousand pounds in your pocket; and I am Mr Campley, worth two thousand a-year—of quality enough to pretend to you—And I do design, before I leave this room, to hear you talk like a reasonable woman, as nature has made you. Nay, 'tis in vain to flounce, and discompose yourself and your dress.

L. Har. If there are swords, if they are men of honour, and not all dastards, cowards, that pretend to this injured person——

[*Running round the room.*

Camp. Ay, ay, madam, let 'em come—That's putting me in my way: fighting's my trade—but you've used all mankind too ill to expect so much service——in short, madam, were you a fool, I should not desire to expostulate with you.

[*Seizing her hand.*

L. Har. Unhand me, ravisher!—[*Pulls her hand from him, and runs round the room,* CAMPLEY *after her.*

Camp. But, madam, madam, madam, why, madam! [*Sings.*

Pr'ythee, Cynthia, look behind you;
Age and wrinkles will o'ertake you.

L. Har. Age, wrinkles, small-pox, nay, any thing that's most abhorrent to youth and bloom, were welcome in the place of so detested a creature.

Camp. No such matter, Lady Harriot:—I would not be a vain coxcomb, but I know I am not detestable, nay, know where you've said as much, before you understood me for your servant. Was I immediately transformed because I became your lover?

L. Har. My lover, sir! Did I ever give you reason to think I admitted you as such?

Camp. Yes, you did, in your using me ill—How do you answer yourself for some parts of your behaviour to me as a gentleman——Do but consider, madam, I have long loved you—bore with this fantastic humour through all its mazes—Nay, do not frown—for 'tis no better——I love with too sincere, too honest a devotion, and would have your mind as faultless as your person, which 'twould be, if you'll lay aside this vanity ——[*She walks about less violently, but more confused.*] Had I not better tell you of it now, than when you were in my power: I should be then too generous to thwart your inclination.

L. Har. That is indeed very handsomely said. Why should I not obey reason as soon as I see it—[*Aside.*] Since so, Mr Campley, I can, as ingeniously as I should then, acknowledge that I have been in an error.

[*Looking down on her fan.*

Camp. Nay, that's too great a condescension. Oh, excellence! I repent! I see 'twas but justice in you to demand my knees, [*Kneeling*] my sighs, my constant, tenderest regard and service—And you shall have 'em, since you are above 'em.

L. Har. Nay, Mr Campley, you won't recal me to a fault you have so lately shewn me——I will not suffer this——No more ecstasies! But pray, sir, what was't you did to get my sister out of the room?

Camp. You may know it; and I must desire you to assist my lord Hardy there, who writ to her by me—For he is no ravisher, as you called me just now.———He is now in the house—— And I would fain gain an interview.

L. Har. That they may have—But they'll make little use of it; for the tongue is the instrument of speech to us of a lower form: they are of that high order of lovers, who know none but eloquent silence, and can utter themselves only by a gesture, that speaks their passion inexpressible——and what not fine things.

Camp. But pray let's go into your sister's closet, while they are together.

L. Har. I swear I don't know how to see my sister—she'll laugh me to death to see me out of my pantoufles, and you and I thus familiar—— However, I know she'll approve it.

Camp. You may boast yourself an heroine to her, and the first woman that was ever vanquished by hearing truth, and had sincerity enough to receive so rough an obligation, as being made acquainted with her faults—Come, madam, stand your ground bravely: we'll march in to her thus.

[*She leaning on* CAMPLEY.

L. Har. Who'll believe a woman's anger more? I've betray'd the whole sex to you, Mr Campley.

[*Exeunt.*

Re-enter Lord HARDY *and* CAMPLEY.

Camp. My lord, her sister, who now is mine, will immediately send her hither——But be yourself——Charge her bravely——I wish she were a cannon—an eighteen-pounder, for your sake—Then, I know, were there occasion, you'd be in the mouth of her.

L. Hardy. I long, yet fear to see her—I know I am unable to utter myself.

Camp. Come, retire here till she appears.

Enter Lady CHARLOTTE.

L. Char. Now is the tender moment now approaching. [*Aside.*] There he is. [*They approach and salute each other, trembling.*] Your lordship will please to sit. [*After a very long pause, stolen glances, and irresolute gestures,*] your lordship, I think, has travelled those parts of Italy where the armies are.

L. Hardy. Yes, madam.

L. Char. I think I have letters from you, dated Mantua.

L. Hardy. I hope you have, madam—and that their purpose——

L. Char. My lord!

[*Looking serious and confused.*

L. Hardy. Was not your ladyship going to say something?

L. Char. I only attended to what your lordship was going to say—that is, my lord—But you were, I believe, going to say something of that garden of the world, Italy—I am very sorry your

misfortunes in England are such as make you justly regret your leaving that place.

L. Hardy. There is a person in England may make those losses insensible to me.

L. Char. Indeed, my lord, there have so very few of quality attended his majesty in the war, that your birth and merit may well hope for his favour.

L. Hardy. I have, indeed, all the zeal in the world for his majesty's service, and most grateful affection for his person, but did not then mean him.

L. Char. But can you, indeed, impartially say, that our island is really preferable to the rest of the world, or is it arrogance only in us to think so?

L. Hardy. I profess, madam, that little I have seen has but more endeared England to me; for that medley of humours which perhaps distracts our public affairs, does, methinks, improve our private lives, and makes conversation more various, and consequently more pleasing——Every where else, both men and things have the same countenance.—In France you meet with much civility and little friendship; in Holland, deep attention, but little reflection; in Italy, all pleasure, but no mirth—but, here with us, where you have every where pretenders, or masters in every thing, you cann't fall into company wherein you shall not be instructed or diverted.

L. Char. I never had an account of any thing from you, my lord, but I mourned the loss of my brother—you would have been so happy a companion for him—With that right sense of yours—My lord, you need not bow so obsequiously, for I do you but justice—But you sent me word of your seeing a lady in Italy very like me ——Did you visit her often?

L. Hardy. Once or twice; but I observed her so loose a creature, that I could have killed her for having your person.

L. Char. I thank you, sir; but Heaven, that preserves me unlike her, will, I hope, make her more like me—But your fellow-traveller—His relations themselves know not a just account of him.

L. Hardy. The original cause of his fever was a violent passion for a fine young woman he had not power to speak to—but I told her his regard for her as passionately as possible.

L. Char. You were to him what Mr Campley has been to you—Whither am I running!—Poor —your friend—Poor gentleman.

L. Hardy. I hope, then, as Campley's eloquence is greater, so has been his success.

L. Char. My lord!

L. Hardy. Your ladyship's———

Enter Lady HARRIOT.

L. Har. Undone! undone!——Tattleaid has found, by some means or other, that Campley brought my lord Hardy hither:—We are utterly ruined; my lady's coming.

L. Hardy. I'll stay and confront her.

L. Char. It must not be——we are too much in her power.

Enter CAMPLEY.

Camp. Come, come, my lord, we're routed, horse and foot—Down the back stairs, and so out. [*Exeunt.*

Ladies. Ay, ay.

L. Har. I tremble, every joint of me.

L. Char. I'm at a stand a little, but rage will recover me.—She's coming in.

Enter Widow.

Wid. Ladies, your servant—I fear I interrupt you:—Have you company? Lady Harriot, your servant!—Lady Charlotte, your servant!—What, not a word?—Oh, I beg your ladyship's pardon—Lady Charlotte, did I say? My young Lady Brumpton, I wish you joy.

L. Char. Oh, your servant, Lady Dowager Brumpton—That's an appellation of much more joy to you.

Wid. So smart, madam!—but you should, methinks, have made one acquainted—Yet, madam, your conduct is seen through.

L. Char. My conduct, Lady Brumpton!

Wid. Your conduct, Lady Charlotte.

[*Coming up to each other.*

L. Char. Madam, 'tis you are seen, through all your thin disguises.

Wid. I seen! By whom?

L. Char. By an all-piercing eye; nay, by what you much more fear,—the eye of the world—The world sees you, or shall see you; it shall know your secret intemperance, your public fasting—Loose poems in your closet, an homily on your toilette—Your easy skilful practised hypocrisy, by which you wrought on your husband basely to transfer the trust and ward of us, two helpless virgins, into the hands and care of—I cannot name it—You're a wicked woman.

L. Har. [*Aside.*] Oh, rare sister! 'Tis a fine thing to keep one's anger in stock by one: we that are angry and pleased every half hour have nothing at all of this high-flown fury. Why, she rages like a princess in a tragedy! Blessings on her tongue.

Wid. Is this the effect of your morning lectures, your self-examination,—all this fury?

L. Char. Yes, it is, madam:—if I take pains to govern my passions, it shall not give licence to others to govern 'em for me.

Wid. Well, Lady Charlotte, however ill you deserve it of me, I shall take care, while there are locks and bars, to keep you from Lord Hardy—from being a lieger lady—from carrying a knapsack.

L. Char. Knapsack! Do you upbraid the poverty your own wicked arts have brought him to?—Knapsack! Oh, grant me patience:—Can I hear this of the man I love? Knapsack! I have not words. [*Stamps about the room.*

Wid. I leave you to cool upon it:—love and anger are very warm passions. [*Exit.*

L. Har. She has locked us in.

L. Char. Knapsack! Well, I will break walls to go to him—I could sit down and cry my eyes out! Dear sister, what a rage have I been in.—Knapsack! I'll give vent to my just resentment—Oh, how shall I avoid this base woman, how meet that excellent man?—I hope 'tis in fate to crown

our loves; for it is only in the protection of men of honour that we are naturally truly safe:——

And woman's happiness, for all her scorn,
Is only by that side whence she was born.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter Lord HARDY, CAMPLEY, *and* TRIM.

L. Hardy. That jade Tattleaid saw me upon the stairs; for I had not patience to keep my concealment, but must peep out to see what was become of you.

Camp. But we have advice, however, it seems, from the garrison already—This mistress of Trim's is a mighty lucky accident.

Trim. Ay, gentlemen, she has free egress and regress; and you know the French are the best bred people in the world—she'll be assistant—but, faith, I have one scruple that hangs about me—and that is—Look you, my lord, we servants have no masters in their absence—In a word, when I am with mademoiselle, I talk of your lordship as only a particular acquaintance; that I do business, indeed, for you sometimes——I must needs say, cries I, that, indeed, my Lord Hardy is really a person I have a great honour for.

L. Hardy. Pish! is that all?—I understand you:—Your mistress does not know that you do me the honour to clean my shoes, or so, upon occasion—Pr'ythee, Will, make yourself as considerable as you please.

Trim. Well, then, your lesson is this——She, out of her respect to me, and understanding Mr Campley was an intimate of my friend my lord Hardy, and condescending (though she is of a great house in France) to make mantuas for the improvement of the English—which gives her easy admittance—She, I say, moved by these promises, has vouchsafed to bring a letter from my lady Harriot to Mr Campley, and came to me to bring her to him. You are to understand, also, that she is dressed in the latest French cut: her dress is the model of their habit, and herself of their manners—for she is—But you shall see her. [*Exit.*

L. Hardy. This gives me some life!—Cheer up, Tom—But behold the solemnity—Do you see Trim's gallantry? I shall laugh out.

Enter TRIM, *leading in Mademoiselle.*

Trim. My dear Lord Hardy, this is Mademoiselle d'Epingle, whose name you've often heard me sigh—[*Lord* HARDY *salutes her.*] Mr Campley,——Mademoiselle d'Epingle.

[CAMPLEY *salutes her.*

Madem. Votre servante, gentlemen, votre servante.

Camp. I protest to you I never saw any thing so becoming as your dress:—Shall I beg the favour you'd condescend to let Mr Trim lead you once round the room, that I may admire the elegance of your habit. [TRIM *leads her round.*

L. Hardy. How could you ask such a thing?

Camp. Pshaw! my lord, you're a bashful English fellow—You see she is not surprised at it—O, madam, your air!—The negligence, the disengagement of your manner! Oh, how delicate is your noble nation! When shall you see an English woman so dressed?

Madem. De Englise! poor barbarians, poor savages, dey know no more of de dress, but to cover dere nakedness. [*Glides along the room.*] Dey be cloded, but no dressed—But, Monsieur Terim, which Monsieur Campley?

Trim. That's honest Tom Campley.

Camp. At your service, mademoiselle.

Madem. I fear I incur de censure, [*Pulling out the letter, and recollecting, as loth to deliver it,*] but Mr Terim being your intimate friend, and I, designing to honour him in de way of an husband—So, so:—How do I run away in discourse?—I never make promise to Mr Terim before, and now do it par accident.

Camp. Dear Will Trim is extremely obliging, in having prevailed upon you to do a thing that the severity of your virtue, and the greatness of your quality, (though a stranger in the country you now honour by your dwelling in it,) would not let you otherwise condescend to.

Madem. Oh, monsieur! Oh, monsieur! you speak my very thoughts—Oh, I don't know how! Pardon me to give a billet—it so look! Oh, fie! I cannot stay after it—[*Drops it, runs affectedly to the other end of the room, then quite out:—re-enters.*] I beg ten thousand pardons for go so mal a-propos. [*Courtesies as going.*

L. Hardy. Your servant, good madam—Mr Trim, you know you command here——Pray, if Madame d'Epingle will honour our cottage with longer stay, wait on her in, and entertain her—Pray, sir, be free.

Trim. My lord, you know your power over me:—I'm all complaisance. [*Leads her out.*

Camp. Now to my dear epistle.——

'Sir,

'There is one thing which you were too generous to touch upon in our last conversation—We have reason to fear the widow's practices in relation to our fortune, if you are not too quick for her—I ask Lady Charlotte whether this is not her sense to Lord Hardy—She says nothing, but lets me write on——These people always have, and

will have admittance every where, therefore we may hear from you.

I am, sir,
Your most obedient servant,
HARRIOT LOVELY.'

My obedient servant! Thy obedience shall ever be as voluntary as now—Ten thousand thousand kisses on thee—thou dear paper—— Look you, my lord———What a pretty hand it is?

L. Hardy. Why, Tom, thou dost not give me leave to see it——you snatch it to your mouth so——you'll stifle the poor lady.

Camp. Look you, my lord, all along the lines, here went the pen, and through the white intervals her snowy fingers. Do you see? This is her name.

L. Hardy. Nay, there's Lady Charlotte's name too in the midst of the letter——Why, you'll not be so unconscionable—you're so greedy—you'll give me one kiss, sure.

Camp. Well, you shall, but you're so eager—Don't bite me—for you sha'n't have it in your hands—There, there, there—Let go my hand.

L. Hardy. What an exquisite pleasure there is in this foolery———But what shall we do?

Camp. I have a thought.—Pr'ythee, my lord, call Trim.

L. Hardy. Ha, Trim!

Camp. Hold, Mr Trim—You forget his mistress is there.

L. Hardy. Gra'mercy!—Dear Will Trim, step in hither.

Camp. Ay, that's something.—

Enter TRIM.

Trim, have not I seen a young woman sometimes carry Madame d'Epingle's trinkets for her, coming from my lady Brumpton's?

Trim. Yes, you might have seen such a one: she waits for her now.

Camp. Do you think you could not prevail for me to be dressed in that wench's clothes, and attend your mistress in her stead thither? They'll not dream we should so soon attend again.

Trim. Yes, I'll engage.

Camp. Then, we'll trust the rest to our good genius: I'll about it instantly——Harriot Lovely!——— [*Exeunt, kissing the letter.*

Enter Widow and TATTLEAID.

Wid. This was well done of you.—Be sure you take care of their young ladyships: you shall, I promise you, have a snip in the sale of them.

Tat. I thank your good ladyship.

Wid. ' that the porter's paper of how d'ye's?

Tat. Yes, madam; he just sent it up: his general answer is, that you are as well as can be expected in your condition; but that you see nobody.

Wid. That's right—[*Reading names.*] Lady Riggle, Lady Formal—Oh, that Riggle! a pert ogler—an indiscreet, silly thing, who is really known by no man, yet, for her carriage, justly thought common to all; and, as Formal has only the appearance of virtue, so she has only the appearance of vice———What chance, I wonder, put these contradictions to each other into the same coach, as you say they called——Mrs Frances and Mrs Winifred Glebe, who are they?

Tat. They are the country great fortunes, have been out of town this whole year; they are those whom your ladyship said, upon being very well born, took upon them to be very ill bred.

Wid. Did I say so? Really I think it was apt enough, now I remember them——Lady Wrinkle. Oh, that smug old woman! there is no enduring her affectation of youth:—but I plague her: I always ask whether her daughter in Wiltshire has a grandchild yet or not—Lady Worth. I cann't bear her company, she has so much of that virtue in her heart which I have in my mouth only. [*Aside.*]——Mrs After-day. Oh, that's she that was the great beauty, the mighty toast about town, that's just come out of the small-pox: she is horribly pitted, they say: I long to see her, and plague her with my condolence. 'Tis a pure ill-natured satisfaction to see one that was a beauty unfortunately move with the same languor and softness of behaviour that once was charming in her; to see, I say, her mortify, that used to kill: ha, ha, ha!—The rest are a catalogue of mere names, or titles they were born to; an insipid crowd of neither good nor bad. But you are sure these other ladies suspect not in the least that I know of their coming?

Tat. No, dear madam; they are to ask for me.

Wid. I hear a coach——[*Exit* TATTLEAID.] I have now an exquisite pleasure in the thought of surpassing my lady Sly, who pretends to have out-grieved the whole town for her husband.—They are certainly coming. Oh, no!—Here let me—thus let me sit and think—[*Widow on her couch; while she is raving, as to herself,* TATTLEAID *softly introduces the ladies.*] Wretched, disconsolate as I am! Oh, welcome, welcome, dear, killing anguish! Oh, that I could lie down and die in my present heaviness! But what—how? Nay, my dear, dear lord, why do you look so pale, so ghastly at me? Wottoo, wottoo! fright thy own trembling, shivering wife!

Tat. Nay, good madam, be comforted.

Wid. Thou shalt not have me———[*Pushes* TATTLEAID.]

Tat. Nay, good madam, 'tis I, 'tis I, your ladyship's own woman:—'Tis I, madam, that dress you, talk to you, and tell you all that's done in the house every day:—'Tis I——

Wid. Is it then possible? Is it then possible that I am left? Speak to me not, hold me not: I'll break the listening walls with my complaints. [*Looks surprised at seeing the company, then severely at* TATTLEAID.] Ah, Tattleaid!

1st Lady. Nay, madam, be not angry at her: we would come in, in spite of her: we are your friends, and are as concerned as you are.

Wid. Ah, madam, madam, madam, madam,

I am an undone woman! Oh, me! alas, alas! Oh, Oh! [*All join in her notes.*] I swoon! I expire! [*Faints.*

2d Lady. Pray, Mrs Tattleaid, bring something that is cordial to her. [*Exit* TATTLEAID.

3d Lady. Indeed, madam, you should have patience:—his lordship was old. To die is but going before in a journey we must all take.

Enter TATTLEAID, *loaded with bottles; 3d Lady takes a bottle from her, and drinks.*

4th Lady. Lord, how my lady Fleer drinks! I have heard, indeed, but never could believe it of her. [*Drinks also.*

1st Lady. But, madam, don't you hear what the town says of the jill-flirt, the men liked so much in the Park?——Hark ye——Was seen with him in a hackney-coach——and silk stockings——key-hole——his wig,—on the chair—

[*Whispers by interruption.*

2d Lady. Impudent flirt, to be found out!

3d Lady. But I speak it only to you.

4th Lady. Nor I, but to one more.

[*Whispers next Woman.*

5th Lady. I cann't believe it; nay, I always thought it, madam. [*Whispers the Widow.*

Wid. Sure, 'tis impossible!—The demure, prim thing—Sure all the world is hypocrisy——Well, I thank my stars, whatsoever sufferings I have, I have none in my reputation. I wonder at the men:—I could never think her handsome. She has really a good shape and complexion, but no mien; and no woman has the use of her beauty without mien: her charms are dumb; they want utterance. But whether does distraction lead me to talk of charms?

1st Lady. Charms! A chit's, a girl's charms!——Come, let us widows be true to ourselves; keep our countenances and our characters; and a fig for the maids; I mean, the unmarried.

2d Lady. Ay, since they will set up for our knowledge, why should not we for their ignorance?

3d Lady. But, madam, o' Sunday morning, at church, I court'sied to you, and looked at a great fuss, in a glaring light dress, next pew. That strong masculine thing is a knight's wife, pretends to all the tenderness in the world, and would fain put the unwieldy upon us, for the soft, the languid. She has of a sudden left her diary, and set up for a fine town lady; calls her maid Cisley her woman; speaks to her by her surname of Mrs Cherryfist; and her great foot-boy, of nineteen, big enough for a trooper, is stripped into a lace coat, now Mr Page, forsooth.

4th Lady. Oh, I have seen her—Well, I heartily pity some people for their wealth; they might have been unknown else——You would die, madam, to see her and her equipage. I thought the honest fat tits, her horses, were ashamed of their finery; they dragged on as if they were all at plough, and a great bashful-look'd booby behind, grasp'd the coach as if he had held one.

5th Lady. Alas! some people think there is nothing but being fine to be genteel; but the high prance of the horses, and the brisk insolence of the servants, in an equipage of quality, are inimitable,—but to our own beasts and servants.

1st Lady. Now you talk of an equipage, I envy this lady the beauty she will appear in in a mourning coach, it will so become her complexion; I confess I myself mourned for two years for no other reason.—Take up that hood there. Oh, that fair face with a veil!

[*They take up her hood.*

Wid. Fie, fie, ladies!——But I have been told, indeed, black does become.

2d Lady. Well, I'll take the liberty to speak it:—There is young Nutbrain has long had (I'll be sworn) a passion for this lady: but I'll tell you one thing I fear she'll dislike, that is, he is younger than she is.

3d Lady. No, that's no exception; but I'll tell you one,—he is younger than his brother.

Wid. Ladies, talk not of such affairs. Who could love such an unhappy relict as I am? But, dear madam, what grounds have you for that idle story?

4th Lady. Why, he toasts you, and trembles where you are spoke of. It must be a match.

Wid. Nay, nay, you rally; you rally; but I know you mean it kindly.

1st Lady. I swear we do.

[TATTLEAID *whispers the Widow.*

Wid. But I must beseech you, ladies, since you have been so compassionate as to visit and accompany my sorrow, to give me the only comfort I can now know,—to see my friends cheerful, and to honour an entertainment Tattleaid has prepared within for you. If I can find strength enough, I'll attend you: but I wish you would excuse me; for I have no relish of food or joy, but will try to get a bit down in my own chamber.

1st Lady. There is no pleasure without you.

Wid. But, madam, I must beg of your ladyship not to be so importune to my fresh calamity, as to mention Nutbrain any more. I am sure there is nothing in it. In love with me, quoth-a!

[*Is led off. Exeunt Ladies, &c.*

Enter Mademoiselle, and CAMPLEY, *in woman's clothes, carrying her things.*

Madem. I am very glad to be in de ladies antichamber:—I was shamed of you, you such impudent look: besides, me wonder you were not seized by the constable, when you pushed de man into de kennel.

Camp. Why, should I have let him kissed me?

Madem. No; but if you had hit him wit fan, and say, Why, sure, saucy-box,—it been enough: beside, what you hitted de gentleman for offer kisse me?

Camp. I beg pardon, I did not know you were pleased with it.

Madem. Please! no; but me rader be kisse den you, Mr Terim's friend, be found out. Could not you say, when he kisse me, Sure, sauce-box, dat's meat for your master. Besides, you take such strides when you walk—Oh, fie! dese little pette tiny bits a woman steps.

[*Shewing her step.*

Camp. But pr'ythee, mademoiselle, why have you lost your English tongue all of a sudden? Methought, when the fellow called us French whores, as we came along, and said we came to starve their own people, you gave them pretty plain English:—he was a dog, a rascal, you'd send him to the stocks.

Madem. Ha, ha, ha! I was in a passion, and betrayed myself; but you are my lover's friend, and a man of honour, therefore know you will do nothing to injure us. Why, Mr Campley, you must know I can speak as good English as you; but I don't, for fear of losing my customers:—The English will never give a price for any thing they understand; nay, I have known some of your fools pretend to buy with good-breeding, and give any rate, rather than not be thought to have French enough to know what they are doing:—strange and far-fetched things they only like: Don't you see how they swallow gallons of the juice of tea, while their own dock-leaves are trod under foot? Mum—My lady Harriot.

Enter Lady HARRIOT.

Madame, votre servante, servante.

Lady Har. Well, mademoiselle, did you deliver my letter?

Madem. Oui.

Lady Har. Well, and how? Is that it in your hand?

Madem. Oui.

Lady Har. Well, then, why don't you give it me?

Madem. Oh, fie, lady! dat be so right Englise:—De Englise mind only de words of de lovers; but de words of de lovers are often lie, but de action no lie.

Lady Har. What does the thing mean? Give me my letter.

Madem. Me did not deliver your letter.

Lady Har. No!

Madem. No: me tell you me did drop it to see Mr Campley how cavalier take it up. As dese me did drop it, so monsieur run to take it up.—[*They both run to take it up; Madem. takes it up.*]—Dus he do——Dere de letter——Very well, very well. Oh, l'amour! You act de manner Mr Campley—Take it up better than I:—Do you not see it?

[*They both run;* HARRIOT *gets it.*

Lady Har. [*Reads.*]

'Madam,

'I am glad you have mentioned, what, indeed, I did not at that time think of, nor, if I had, should I have known how to have spoken of. But bless me more than fortune can, by turning those fair eyes upon, madam,

Your most faithful,

Most obedient, humble servant,

THOMAS CAMPLEY.'

What does he mean?—But bless me more, by turning!—Oh, 'tis he himself! [*Looking about, observes* CAMP. *smile.*] Oh, the hoyden! the romp!—I did not think any thing could add to your native confidence: but you look so very bold in that dress, and your arms fall off, and your petticoats, how they hang!

Camp. Mademoiselle, voulez vous de salville l'eau de Hongrie, chez Monsieur Marchant de Montpelier—Dis for your teet. [*Shewing his trinkets.*] De Essence; a little French book, for teach de elder brother make compliments. Will you, I say, have any thing that I have? Will you have all I have, madam?

Lady Har. Yes, and, for the humour's sake, will never part with this box while I live; ha, ha, ha!

Camp. But, Lady Harriot, we must not stand laughing; as you observe in your letter, delays are dangerous in this wicked woman's custody of you; therefore, I must, madam, beseech you, and pray, stay not on niceties, but be advised.

Lady Har. Mr Campley, I have no will but yours.

Camp. Thou dear creature!—But [*Kisses her hand*] hark'e, then you must change dresses with mademoiselle, and go with me instantly.

Lady Har. What you please.

Camp. Madame d'Epingle, I must desire you to comply with a humour of gallantry of ours:—You may be sure I'll have an eye over the treatment you have upon my account—only to change habits with Lady Harriot, and let her go while you stay.

Madem. Wit all my heart.

[*Offers to undress herself.*

Lady Har. What! before Mr Campley?

Madem. Oh! Oh! very Anglaise! Dat is so Englise:—All women of quality in France are dress and undress by a valet-de-chambre: de man chamber-maid help complexion better den de woman.

[*Apart to* HAR.

Lady Har. Nay, that's a secret in dress, mademoiselle, I never knew before; and am so unpolished an English woman, as to resolve never to learn even to dress before my husband. Oh, indecency! Mr Campley, do you hear what mademoiselle says?

Madem. Oh, hist!—Bagatelle.

Lady Har. Well, we'll run in, and be ready in an instant.

[*Exeunt Lady* HARRIOT *and Mademoiselle.*

Camp. Well, I like her every minute better and better. What a delicate chastity she has! There is something so gross in the carriage of some wives, (though they are honest too,) that they lose their husband's hearts for faults which,

if they have either good nature or good breeding, they know not how to tell them of. But, how happy am I in such a friend as Hardy, such a mistress as Harriot!

Continue, Heav'n, a grateful heart to bless,
With faith in friendship, and in love success.
[*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter Widow and TRUSTY.

Wid. Mr Trusty, you have, I do assure you, the same place and power in the management of my lord Brumpton's estate, as in his lifetime. I am reduced to a necessity of trusting him. [*Aside.*] However Tattleaid dissembles the matter, she must be privy to Lady Harriot's escape; and Fardingale is as deep as them both, and, I fear, will be their ruin, which it is my care and duty to prevent. Be vigilant, and you shall be rewarded. I shall employ you wholly in Lady Charlotte's affairs: she is able to pay services done for both. You have sense, and understand me. [*Exit Widow.*

Trusty. Yes, I do indeed understand you, and could wish another could, with as much detestation as I do; but my poor old lord is so strangely, so bewitchedly enamoured of her, that, even after this discovery of her wickedness, I see he could be reconciled to her; and though he is ashamed to confess to me, I know he longs to speak with her. If I tell Lord Hardy all, to make his fortune, he would not let his father be dishonoured by a public way of separation: If things are acted privately, I know she will throw us all: There is no middle way:—I must expose her, to make a re-union impracticable.

Enter Lord HARDY, CAMPLEY, *and* TRIM.

L. Hardy. I forget my own misfortunes, dear Campley, when I reflect on your success.

Camp. I assure you it moderates the swell of joy that I am in, to think of your difficulties. I hope my felicity is previous to yours. My Lady Harriot gives her service to you; and we both think it but decent to suspend our marriage till your and Lady Charlotte's affairs are in the same posture.

L. Hardy. Where is my lady?

Camp. She is at my aunt's, my lord. But, my lord, if you don't interpose, I don't know how I shall adjust matters with Mr Trim, for leaving his mistress behind me:—I fear he'll demand satisfaction of me.

Trim. No, sir. Alas! I can know no satisfaction while she is in jeopardy! therefore would rather be put in a way to recover her, by storming the castle, or other feat of arms, like a true enamoured swain, as I am.

Enter Boy.

Boy. There is one Mr Trusty below, would speak with my lord.

L. Hardy. Mr Trusty,—my father's steward! What can he have to say to me?

Camp. He is very honest, to my knowledge.

L. Hardy. I remember, indeed, when I was turned out of the house, he followed me to the gate, and wept over me, for which, I have heard, he had like to have lost his place. But, however, I must advise with you a little, about my behaviour to him. Let us in. Boy, bring him up hither: tell him I'll wait on him presently.—[*Exit Boy.*]—I shall want you, I believe, here, Trim.
[*Exeunt.*

Re-enter Boy and TRUSTY.

Boy. My lord will wait on you here immediately. [*Exit.*

Trusty. 'Tis very well. These lodgings are but homely for the Earl of Brumpton. Oh, that damned strumpet! that I should ever know my master's wife for such. How many thousand things does my head run back to? After my poor father's death, the good lord took me, because he was a captain in his regiment, and gave me education: I was, I think, three-and-twenty when this young lord was christened——What ado there was about calling him Francis! [*Wipes his eyes.*] These are but poor lodgings for him. I cannot bear the joy, to think that I shall save the family from which I have had my bread.

Enter TRIM.

Trim. Sir, my lord will wait on you immediately.

Trusty. Sir, 'tis my duty to wait on him——[*As* TRIM *is going.*] But, sir, are not you the young man that attended him at Christ Church, in Oxford, and have followed him ever since?

Trim. Yes, sir, I am.

Trusty. Nay, sir, no harm; but you'll thrive the better for it.

Trim. I like this old fellow:—I smell more money. [*Aside.*] [*Exit.*

Trusty. I think it is now eight years since I saw him: he was not then nineteen, when I followed him to the gate, and gave him fifty guineas, which I pretended his father sent after him.

Enter Lord HARDY.

L. Hardy. Mr Trusty, I am very glad to see

you: you look very hale and jolly; you wear well; I am glad to see it——But your commands to me, Mr Trusty?

Trusty. Why, my lord, I presume to wait upon your lordship———My lord, you are strangely grown: you are your father's very picture; you are he, my lord: you are the very man that looked so pleased to see me look so fine in my laced livery, to go to court. I was his page, when he was just such another as you. He kissed me afore a great many lords, and said I was a brave man's son, that had taught him to exercise his arms. I remember he carried me to the great window, and bid me be sure to keep in your mother's sight, in all my finery. She was the finest young creature: the maids of honour hated to see her at court. My lord then courted my good lady. She was as kind to me on her death-bed:—She said to me, Mr Trusty, take care of my lord's second marriage, for that child's sake: she pointed as well as she could to you: you fell a-crying, and said she should not die: but she did, my lord; she left the world, and no one like her in it. Forgive me, my honoured master. [*Weeps, runs to my lord, and hugs him.*] I've often carried you in these arms that grasp you; they were stronger then:—but if I die to-morrow, you're worth five thousand pounds, by my gift; 'tis what I've got in the family, and I return it to you with thanks——But, alas! do I live to see you want it?

L. Hardy. You confound me with all this tenderness and generosity.

Trusty. I'll trouble you no longer, my lord—but——

L. Hardy. Call it not a trouble, for——

Trusty. My good lord, I will not, I say, indulge myself in talking fond tales, that melt me, and interrupt my story—My business to your lordship, in one word, is this: I am in good confidence, at present, with my lady dowager, and I know she has some fears upon her, which depend upon the nature of the settlement to your disfavour; and, under the rose———be yourself——I fear your father has not had fair play for his life—be composed, my lord. What is to be done in this?—We'll not apply to public justice in this case, till we see farther; 'twill make a noise, which we must not do, if I might advise. You shall, with a detachment of your company, seize the corpse, as it goes out of the house this evening, to be interred in the country; 'twill only look like taking the administration upon yourself, and commencing a suit for the estate. She has put off the lying in state: and Lady Harriot's escape with Mr Campley makes her fear he will prove a powerful friend, both to the young ladies and your lordship.—She cannot, with decency, be so busy as when the corpse is out of the house, therefore hastens it.—I know your whole affair.—Leave the care of Lady Charlotte to me; I'll pre-acquaint her, that she may not be frightened, and dispose of her safety, to observe the issue.

L. Hardy. I wholly understand you:—it shall be done.

Trusty. I'm sure I am wanted this moment for your interest at home. This ring shall be the passport of intelligence from whom you send to assault us, and the remittance of it, sealed with this, shall be authentic from within the house.

L. Hardy. 'Tis very well.

Trusty. Hope all you can wish, my lord, from a certain secret relating to the estate, which I'll acquaint you with next time I see you. [*Exit.*

L. Hardy. Your servant—This fellow's strangely honest—Ha! Will.—

Enter CAMPLEY *and* TRIM.

Will, don't the recruits wait for me, to see them at their parade before this house?

Trim. Yes, and have waited these three hours.

L. Hardy. Go to them; I'll be there myself immediately:—we must attack with them, if the rogues are sturdy, this very evening.

Trim. I guess where—I'm overjoy'd at it.—I'll warrant you they'll do it, if I command in chief.

L. Hardy. I design you shall.

[TRIM *runs out, jumping.*

Camp. You seem, my lord, to be in deep meditation.

L. Hardy. I am so, but not on any thing that you may not be acquainted with. [*Exit.*

Enter TRIM, *with a Company of ragged Fellows, with a cane.*

1*st Sol.* Why, then, I find, Mr Trim, we shall come to blows before we see the French.

Trim. Hark'e, friend, 'tis not your affair to guess or enquire what you are going to do; 'tis only for us commanders.

2*d Sol.* The French! Pox!—they are but a company of scratching civet cats—They fight!

Trim. Hark'e, don't bluster—Were not you a little mistaken in your facings at Steenkirk?

2*d Sol.* I grant it:—You know I have an antipathy to the French——I hate to see the dogs——Look you here, gentlemen; I was shot quite through the body——Look you.

Trim. Pry'thee, look where it entered at your back.

2*d Sol.* Look you, Mr Trim, you will have your joke; we know you are a wit——But what's that to a fighting man?

Enter KATE.

Kate. Mr Trim! Mr Trim!

Trim. Things are not as they have been, Mrs Kate:—I now pay the company—and we that pay money expect a little more ceremony.

Kate. Will your honour please to taste some right French brandy?

Trim. Art thou sure, good woman, 'tis right?—[*Drinks.*] How—French—pray—nay, if I find you deceive me, who pay the men—— [*Drinks.*

Kate. Pray, good master, have you spoke to my lord about me?

Trim. I have, but you shall speak to him yourself—thou hast been a true campaigner, Kate, and we must not neglect thee—Do you sell grey pease yet of an evening, Mrs Matchlock?——

[*Drinks again.*

Kate. Any thing to turn the penny; but I got more money by crying pamphlets this year, than by any thing I have done a great while——Now I am married into the company again, I design to cross the seas next year. But, master, my husband, a Temple porter, and a parliament-man's footman, last night by their talk made me think there was danger of a peace; why, they said all the prime people were against a war.

Trim. No, no, Kate, never fear, you know I keep great company; all men are for war, but some would have it abroad, and some would have it at home in their own country.

Kate. Ay, say you so?—Drink about, gentlemen, not a farthing to pay; a war is a war, be it where it will——But pray, Mr Trim, speak to my lord, that when these gentlemen have shirts I may wash for them.

Trim. I tell you, if you behave well to-night, you shall have a fortnight's pay each man as a reward; but there's none of you industrious—there's a thousand things you might do to help out about this town——as to cry——puff—puff pies. Have you any knives or scissars to grind——or late in an evening, whip from Grub-street, strange and bloody news from Flanders——votes from the house of commons——buns, rare buns——old silver lace, cloaks, suits, or coats——old shoes, boots, or hats.—But here, here, here's my lord a-coming——here's the captain; fall back into the rank——There, move up in the centre.

Enter Lord HARDY *and* CAMPLEY.

L. Hardy. Let me see whether my ragged friends are ready and about me.

Kate. Ensign Campley, Ensign Campley, I am overjoyed to see your honour—ha! the world's surely altered, ha!

Camp. It is so, 'faith, Kate; why, art thou true to the cause, with the company still, honest amazon!

Kate. Dear soul, not a bit of pride in him; but won't your honour help me in my business with my lord?—Speak for me, noble ensign, do.

Camp. Speak to him yourself, I'll second you.

Kate. Noble captain, my lord, I suppose Mr Trim has told your honour about my petition: I have been a great sufferer in the service; 'tis hard for a poor woman to lose nine husbands in a war, and no notice taken; nay, three of them, alas! in the same campaign: here the woman stands that says it. I never stripped a man 'till I first tried if he could stand on his legs, and if not, I think 'twas fair plunder, except our adjutant, and he was a puppy that made my eighth husband run the gauntlet for not turning his toes out.

L. Hardy. Well, we'll consider thee, Kate; but fall back into the rear. A roll of what? gentlemen soldiers——

Trim to Bumpkin.] Do you hear that? my lord himself cann't deny but we are all gentlemen, as much as his honour.

L. Hardy, reading.] Gentlemen soldiers quartered in and about Guy-Court in Vinegar-Yard, in Russel-Court in Drury-Lane; belonging to the honourable Captain Hardy's company of foot——So, answer to your names, and march off from the left——Corporal Swagger, march easy, that I may view you as you pass by me; drums, Simon Ruffle, Darby Tatoo——there's a shilling for you——Tatoo, be always so tight: how does he keep himself so clean?

Trim. Sir, he is a tragedy-drum to one of the play-houses.

L. Hardy. Private gentlemen———Alexander Cowitch, Humphrey Mundungus, William Faggot, Nicholas Scab, Timothy Megrim, Philip Scratch, Nehemiah Dust, Humphrey Garbage, Nathaniel Matchlock.

Camp. What, is Matchlock come back to the company? that's the fellow that brought me off at Steenkirk.

L. Hardy. No, sir, 'tis I am obliged to him for that [*Offering to give him money;*] there, friend: you shall want for nothing, I'll give thee a halbert too.

Kate. O brave me! shall I be a serjeant's lady—i'faith I'll make the drums, and the corporals wives, and company-keepers know their distance.

Match. I was whipt from constable to constable—

Trim. Ay, my lord, that's due by the courtesy of England to all that want in red coats; besides, there's an act that makes us free of all corporations, and that's the ceremony of it.

Camp. But what pretence had they for using you so ill, you did not pilfer?

Match. I was found guilty of being poor.

Camp. Poor devil!

L. Hardy. Timothy Ragg——Oh, Ragg! I thought when I gave you your discharge, just before the peace, we should never have had you again; how came you to list now?

Ragg. To pull down the French king.

L. Hardy. Bravely resolved——but pull your shirt into your breeches, in the mean time—Jeoffrey Tatter—what's become of the skirts and buttons of your coat?

Tatter. In our last clothing, in the regiment I served in before, the colonel had one skirt before, the agent one behind, and every captain of the regiment a button.

L. Hardy. Hush, you rogue, you talk mutiny.

[*Smiling.*

Trim. Ay, sirrah, what have you to do with more knowledge than that of your right hand from your left? [*Hits him a blow on the head.*

L. Hardy. Hugh Clump—Clump, thou growest a little too heavy for marching.

Trim. Ay, my lord, but if we don't allow him the pay, he'll starve, for he's too lame to get into the hospital.

L. Hardy. Richard Bumpkin: Ha! a perfect country hick—how came you, friend, to be a soldier?

Bump. An't please your honour, I have been crossed in love, and am willing to seek my fortune.

L. Hardy. Well, I've seen enough of them: if you mind your affair, and act like a wise general, these fellows may do——come, take your order. [TRIM *puts his hat on his stick, while my lord is giving him the ring, and whispers orders.*] Well, gentlemen, do your business manfully, and nothing shall be too good for you.

All. Bless your honour.

[*Exeunt L.* HARDY *and* CAMPLEY.

Trim. Now, my brave friends and fellow-soldiers——[*Aside.*] I must fellow-soldier them just before battle, like a true officer, though I cane them all the year round beside. [*Strutting about.* Major-general Trim! no, pox, Trim sounds so very short and priggish——that my name should be a monosyllable! But the foreign news will write me, I suppose, Monsieur or Chevalier Trimont. Seigneur Trimoni, or Count Trimuntz, in the German army, I shall perhaps be called; ay, that's all the plague and comfort of us great men, they do so toss our names about——But, gentlemen, you are now under my command——Huzza! thrice——faith, this is very pleasing, this grandeur! why, after all, it is upon the neck of such scoundrels as these gentlemen, that we great captains build our renown——A million or two of these fellows make an Alexander, and as that my predecessor said in the tragedy of him on the very same occasion, going to storm for his Statira, so do I for my dear sempstress, Madam d'Epingle.

When I rush on, sure none will dare to stay;
'Tis beauty calls, and glory leads the way.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter TRUSTY *and Lord* BRUMPTON.

Trusty. She knows no moderation in her good fortune——You may hear her and Tattleaid laugh aloud——She is so wantonly merry.

L. Brump. But this of Lady Charlotte is the very utmost of all ill———Pray read—but I must sit—my late fit of the gout makes me act with pain and constraint—let me see———

Trusty. She writ it by the page, who brought it me, as I had wheedled him to do all their passages.

L. Brump. [*Reads.*]———'You must watch the occasion of the servants being gone out of the house with the corpse: Tattleaid shall conduct you to my lady Charlotte's apartment—away with her, and be sure you bed her———

Your affectionate sister,
MARY BRUMPTON.'

Brumpton! The creature—She called as Frank's mother was!—This is to forget her very humanity—her very sex.—Where is my poor boy? where's Frank?—does not he want?—how has he lived all this time?——not a servant, I warrant, to attend him——what company can he keep?—what can he say of his father?

Trusty. Though you made him not your heir, he is still your son——and has all the duty and tenderness in the world for your memory———

L. Brump. It is impossible, Trusty, it is impossible———I will not rack myself with the thought. That one I have injured can be so very good!—Keep me in countenance—tell me he hates my very name———would not assume my title, because it descends from me.——What's his company?

Trusty. Young Tom Campley: they are never asunder.

L. Brump. I am glad he has my pretty tattler—the cheerful innocent— —Harriot———I hope he'll be good to her——he's good-natured, and well-bred———

Trusty. But, my lord, she was very punctual in ordering the funeral———she bade Sable be sure to lay you deep enough———she had heard such stories of the wicked sextons taking up people——but I wish, my lord, you would please to hear her and Tattleaid once more.

L. Brump. I know to what thy zeal tends——But I tell you, since you cannot be convinced but that I have still a softness for her———I behold her now with the same eyes that you do——she has a great wit, but a little mind—something ever wanting to make her appear my lady Brumpton———she has nothing natively great. You see I love her not———I talk with judgment of her———

Trusty. I see it, my good lord, with joy I see it——nor care how few things I see more in this world——my satisfaction is complete——welcome old age——welcome decay—'tis not decay, but growth to a later being.

[*Exit, leading L.* BRUMPTON.

Re-enter TRUSTY, *meeting* CABINET.

Trusty. I have your letter, Mr Cabinet.

Cab. I hope, sir, you'll believe it was not in my nature to be guilty of so much baseness; but being born a gentleman, and bred out of all road of industry, in that idle manner too many are, I soon spent a small patrimony; and being debauched by luxury I fell into the narrow mind to dread no infamy like poverty—which made me guilty, as that paper tells you—and had I not writ to you, I am sure I never could have told you of it.

Trusty. It is an ingenuous, pious penitence in you—my Lord Hardy—(to whom this secret is inestimable) is a noble natured man—and you shall find him such—I give you my word———

Cab. I know, sir, your integrity———

Trusty. But pray be there—all that you have to do is to ask for the gentlewoman at the house, at my Lord Hardy's—she'll take care of you—And pray have patience, where she places you, 'till you see me.——[*Exit* CAB.] My lord Hardy's being at an house where they receive lodgers, has allowed me convenience to place every body I think necessary to be by at her discovery——This prodigious welcome secret! I see, however impracticable honest actions may appear, we may go on with just hope,

All that is ours, is to be justly bent,
And Heaven in its own cause will bless th' event. [*Exit.*

Enter Widow in deep mourning, with a dead squirrel on her arm, and TATTLEAID.

Wid. It must be so—It must be your carelessness—What had the page to do in my bedchamber?

Tat. Indeed, madam, I cann't tell—But I came in and catch'd him wringing round his neck——

Wid. Tell the rascal from me, he shall romp with the footmen no more—No—I'll send the rogue in a frock to learn Latin among the dirty boys that come to good—I will—Poor harmless animal—pretty ev'n in death.———

Death might have overlook'd thy little life—
How could'st thou, Robin, leave thy nuts and me?
Cheerfully didst bear thy little chain,
Content—So I but fed thee with this hand.

Tat. Alas! alas! we are all mortal: consider, madam, my lord's dead too.

Wid. Ay, but our animal friends do wholly die; an husband or relation, after death, is rewarded or tormented——that's some consolation——I know her tears are false, for she hated Robin always. [*Aside.*] But she's a well-bred dishonest servant, that never speaks a painful truth——But I'll resolve to conquer my affliction——Never speak more of Robin———Hide him there——But to my dress——How soberly magnificent is black—and the train—I wonder how widows came to wear such long tails?

Tat. Why, madam, the stateliest of all creatures has the longest tail, the peacock; nay, it has of all creatures the finest mien too—except your ladyship, who are a phœnix———

Wid. Ho! brave Tattleaid——But did not you observe what a whining my lady Sly made, when she had drank a little? Did you believe her? Do you think there are really people sorry for their husbands?

Tat. Really, madam, some men do leave their fortunes in such distraction, that I believe it may be— . [*Speaks with pins in her mouth.*

Wid. But, I swear I wonder how it came up to dress us thus——But I protest I wonder how two of us thus clad can meet with a grave face—methinks they should laugh out like two fortune-tellers, or two opponent lawyers that know each other for cheats.

Tat. Ha! ha! ha! I swear to you, madam your ladyship's wit will choke me one time or other——I had like to have swallowed all the pins in my mouth———

Wid. [*A noise within.*]—Ha! what noise is that—that noise of fighting—Run, I say—Whither are you going—What, are you mad—Will you leave me alone——Cann't you stir—What, you cann't take your message with you—Whatever 'tis, I suppose you are not in the plot; not you!—Nor that now they're breaking open my house for Charlotte——Not you—Go see what's the matter, I say——I have nobody I can trust ——One [*Exit* TATTLEAID] minute I think this wretch honest, and the next false——Whither shall I turn me!

Tat. Madam!——Madam! [*Re-entering.*

Wid. Madam, madam, will you swallow me gaping?—

Tat. Pray, good my lady, be not so out of humour—But there is a company of rogues have set upon our servants and the burial man's, while others ran away with the corpse———

Wid. How, what can this mean! what can they do with it! Well, 'twill save the charge of interment—But to what end?

Enter TRUSTY, *and a Servant bloody and dirty, hauling in* CLUMP *and* BUMPKIN.

Serv. I'll teach you better manners—I'll poor soldier you—you dog you, I will—Madam, here are two of the rascals that were in the gang of rogues that carried away the corpse.

Wid. We'll examine them apart——Well, sirrah, what are you? whence came you? what's your name, sirrah?

[CLUMP *makes signs as a dumb man.*

Serv. O, you dog, you could speak loud enough just now, sirrah, when your brother rogues mauled Mr Sable——we'll make you speak, sirrah.

Wid. Bring the other fellow hither—I suppose you will own you knew that man before you saw him at my door?

Clump. I think I have seen the gentleman's face. [*Bowing to* BUMPKIN.

Wid. The gentleman's? the villain mocks me ——But, friend, you look like an honest man, what are you? whence came you? What are you, friend?

Bump. I'se at present but a private gentleman, but I was listed to be a serjeant in my lord Hardy's company———I'se not ashamed of my name, nor of my koptin———

Wid. Leave the room all. [*Exeunt all but* TRUSTY *and* TATTLEAID.]—Mr Trusty—Lord Hardy! O that impious young man—thus, with the sacrilegious hands of ruffians to divert his father's ashes from their urn, and rest—I suspect this fellow. [*Aside.*] Mr Trusty, I must desire you to be still near me—I'll know the bottom of this, and go to Lord Hardy's lodgings, as I am, instantly—'Tis but the backside of this street, I think—Let a coach be called—Tattleaid, as soon as I am gone, conduct my brother and his friends

to Lady Charlotte: away with her—bring mademoiselle away to me, that she may not be a witness—Come, good Mr Trusty. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Lord HARDY, *leading* HARRIOT, CAMPLEY, *and* TRIM.

L. Har. Why, then, I find this Mr Trim is a perfect general. But were not you saying, my lord, you believed Lady Brumpton would follow hither? If so, pray let me be gone———

L. Hardy. No, madam; I must beseech your ladyship to stay; for there are things alleged against her which you, who have lived in the family, may, perhaps, give light into, and which I cann't believe even she could be guilty of.

L. Har. Nay, my lord, that's generous to a folly, for even for her usage of you (without regard to myself), I am ready to believe she would do any thing that can come into the head of a close, malicious, cruel, designing woman.

Enter Boy.

Boy. My lady Brumpton's below———

L. Har. I'll run then——

Camp. No, no, stand your ground; you're a soldier's wife. Come, we'll rally her to death——

L. Hardy. Pr'ythee entertain her a little, while I go in for a moment's thought on this occasion. [*Exit.*

L. Har. She has more wit than us both——

Camp. Pshaw, no matter for that——Be sure, as soon as the sentence is out of my mouth, to clap in with something else—and laugh at all I say: I'll be grateful, and burst myself at my pretty witty wife—We'll fall in slap upon her—She sha'n't have time to say a word of the running away.

Enter Lady BRUMPTON *and* TRUSTY.

O, my lady Brumpton, your ladyship's most obedient servant. This is my lady Harriot Campley——Why, madam, your ladyship is immediately in your mourning—Nay, as you have more wit than any body, so (what seldom wits have) you have more prudence too—Other widows have nothing in readiness but a second husband—but you, I see, had your very weeds and dress lying by you———

L. Har. Ay, madam: I see your ladyship is of the order of widowhood, for you have put on the habit——

Wid. I see your ladyship is not of the profession of virginity, for you have lost the look on't——

Camp. You're in the habit—That was so pretty; nay, without flattery, Lady Harriot, you have a great deal of wit, ha! ha! ha!

L. Har. No, my lady Brumpton, here, is the woman of wit; but indeed she has got but little enough, considering how much her ladyship has to defend—Ha! ha! ha!

Wid. I'm sorry, madam, your ladyship has not what's sufficient for your occasions, or that this pretty gentleman cann't supply them. [CAMPLEY *dancing about and trolling.*] Hey-day, I find, sir, your heels are a great help to your head—They relieve your wit, I see; and I don't question but ere now they have been as kind to your valour—Ha! ha! ha!

Camp. Pox! I can say nothing, 'tis always thus with your endeavours to be witty. [*Aside.*] I saw, madam, your mouth go, but there could be nothing offered in answer to what my lady Harriot said—'Twas home—'Twas cutting satire——

L. Har. Oh, Mr Campley! But pray, madam, has Mr Cabinet visited your ladyship since this calamity——How stands that affair now?

Wid. Nay, madam, if you already want instructions——I'll acquaint you how the world stands, if you are in distress, but I fear Mr Campley overhears us.

Camp. I swear, Lady Harriot, were I not already yours, I could have a tendre for this lady.

Wid. Come, good folks, I find we are very free with each other——What makes you two here? Do you board my lord, or he you? Come, come, ten shillings a-head will go a great way in a family.———What do you say, Mrs Campley, is it so? Does your ladyship go to market yourself?—Nay, you are in the right of it—Come, can you imagine what makes my lord stay? He is not now with his land steward—not signing leases, I hope—Ha! ha! ha!

Camp. Hang her, to have more tongue than a man and his wife too. [*Aside.*

Enter Lord HARDY.

L. Hardy. Because your ladyship is, I know, in very much pain in company that you have injur'd, I'll be short——Open those doors; there lies your husband's, my father's, body, and by you stands the man accuses you of poisoning him!

Wid. Of poisoning him!

Trusty. The symptoms will appear upon the corpse.

L. Hardy. But I am seized by nature. How shall I view a breathless lump of clay—him, whose high veins conveyed to me this vital force and motion.

I cannot bear this sight——
I am as fix'd and motionless as he———
[*They open the coffin, out of which jumps Lady* CHARLOTTE.
Art thou the ghastly shape my mind had form'd?
Art thou the cold inanimate—Bright maid!
Thou giv'st new higher life to all around.
Whither does fancy, fir'd with love, convey me?
Why is my fair unmov'd—My heav'nly fair;
Does she but smile at my exalted rapture?

L. Char. Speak on, speak on, and charm my attentive ear:
How sweet applause is from an honest tongue!
Nor now with fond reluctance doubt to enter
My spacious, bright abode, this gallant heart.
[*Reclines on* HARDY.

L. Har. Ay, marry, these are high doings indeed; the greatness of the occasion has burst their passion into speech—Why, Mr Campley, when we are near these fine folks, you and I are

but mere sweethearts—I protest, I'll never be won so; you shall begin again with me.

Camp. Pr'ythee, why dost name us poor animals! They have forgot there are any such creatures as their old acquaintance Tom and Harriot.

L. Hardy. So we did indeed, but you'll pardon us.

Camp. My lord, I never thought to see the minute wherein I should rejoice at your forgetting me, but now I do heartily. [*Embracing.*

Wid. Sir, you're at the bottom of all this—— I see your skill at close conveyances—I'll know the meaning instantly of these intricacies; 'tis not your seeming honesty and gravity shall save you from your deserts——My husband's death was sudden—you and the burial fellow were observ'd very familiar—Produce my husband's body, or I'll try you for his murder; which I find you'd put on me, thou hellish engine!

Trusty Look you, madam, I could answer you, but I scorn to reproach people in misery—you're undone, madam—

Wid. What does the dotard mean? Produce the body, villain, or the law shall have thine for it—[TRUSTY *exit, hastily.*] Do you design to let the villain escape? How justly did your father judge, that made you a beggar with that spirit—You mentioned just now you could not bear the company of those you'd injur'd.

L. Hardy. You are a woman, madam, and my father's widow—but sure you think you've highly injur'd me.

[*Here my Lord and* TRUSTY *half enter and observe.*

Wid. No, sir, I have not, will not injure you—I must obey the will of my deceased lord to a tittle—I must justly pay legacies. Your father, in consideration that you were his blood, would not wholly alienate you—he left you, sir, this shilling, with which estate you are now Earl of Brumpton.

L. Hardy. Insolent woman—It was not me my good father disinherited, 'twas him you represented. The guilt was thine, he did an act of justice.

Enter Lord BRUMPTON *with* TRUSTY.

L. Brump. Oh, unparalleled goodness!

Trusty. Oh, Tattleaid—his and our hour is come!

Wid. What do I see, my lord, my master, husband, living!

L. Brump. [*Turning from her, running to his son.*] Oh! my boy, my son——Mr Campley—Charlotte—Harriot—[*All kneeling to him.*] Oh, my children, I shall expire in the too mighty pleasure! my boy!

L. Hardy. A son, an heir! a bridegroom in one hour! Oh, grant me, Heaven, grant me moderation!

Wid. A son, an heir! Am I neglected then?
What! can my lord revive, yet dead to me?
Only to me deceased—to me alone,
Deaf to my sighs, and senseless to my moan?

L. Brump. 'Tis so long since I have seen plays, good madam, that I know not whence thou dost repeat, nor can I answer.

Wid. You can remember though a certain settlement, in which I am thy son and heir, great noble! that I suppose not taken from a play, that's as irrevocable as law can make it.

Trusty. Value her not, my lord; a prior obligation made you incapable of settling on her, your wife.

L. Brump. Thy kindness, Trusty, does distract thee—I would indeed disengage myself by any honest means, but, alas, I know no prior gift that avoids this to her.

Trusty. Look you, madam, I'll come again immediately—Be not troubled, my dear lords—

[*Exit.*

Camp. Trusty looks very confident, there is some good in that.

Re-enter TRUSTY *with* CABINET.

Cab. What! my lord Brumpton living?—— nay, then——

Trusty. Hold, sir, you must not stir, nor can you, sir, retract this for your hand-writing—My lord, this gentleman, since your supposed death, has lurked about the house to speak with my lady, or Tattleaid, who, upon your decease, have shunned him, in hopes, I suppose, to buy him off for ever—Now, as he was prying about, he peep'd into your closet——where he saw your lordship reading—struck with horror, and believing himself (as well he might) the disturber of your ghost for alienation of your fortune from your family—he writ me this letter, wherein he acknowledges a private marriage with this lady, half a year before you ever saw her.

All. How! [*All turn upon her disdainfully.*

Wid. No more a widow then, but still a wife.

[*Recovering from her confusion.*

I am thy wife—thou author of my evil.
Thou must partake with me an homely board,
An homely board that never shall be cheerful;
But ev'ry meal embitter'd with upbraidings,
Thou that couldst tell me, good and ill were words,
Thou that couldst basely let me to another,
Yet couldst see sprites, great unbeliever!
Coward! bugg-bear'd penitent—
Stranger henceforth to all my joys, my joys.
To thy dishonour: despicable thing,
Dishonour thee! Thou voluntary cuckold!
Thou disgrace to thy own sex, and the whole human race!
May scorn and beggary pursue thy name,
And dark despair close up a life of shame.

[CABINET *sneaks off.* *Widow flings after him,* TATTLEAID *following.*

L. Brump. I see you're all confused as well as I—Ye are my children—I hold you all so. And for your own use will speak plainly to you. I cannot hate that woman: nor shall she ever want. Though I scorn to bear her injuries——yet had I ne'er been roused from that low passion to a

worthless creature—but by disdain of her attempt on my friend's child. I am glad that scorn's confirmed by her being that fellow's—whom for my own sake I only will contemn. Thee, Trusty, how shall we prosecute with equal praise and thanks, for this great revolution in our house!

Trusty. Never to speak on't more, my lord.

L. Brump. Now, gentlemen, let the miseries which I have but miraculously escaped, admonish you to have always inclinations proper for the stage of life you are in.

You who the path of honour make your guide,
Must let your passion with your blood subside;
And no untim'd ambition, love, or rage,
Employ the moments of declining age;
Else boys will in your presence lose their fear,
And laugh at the grey head they should revere.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

Love, hope, and fear, desire, aversion, rage,
All that can move the soul, or can assuage,
Are drawn in miniature of life, the stage.
Here you can view yourselves, and here is shown,
To what you're born in sufferings not your own.
The stage to wisdom's no fantastic way,
Athens herself learn'd virtue at a play.
Our author me to-night a soldier drew;
But faintly writ, what warmly you pursue:
To his great purpose, had he equal fire,
He'd not aim to please only, but inspire;
He'd sing what hovering fate attends our isle,
And from base pleasure rouse to glorious toil.
Full time the earth t' a new decision brings,
While William gives the Roman eagle wings;
With arts and arms shall Britain tamely end,
Which naked Picts so bravely could defend;
The painted heroes on th' invaders press,
And think their wounds addition to their dress:
In younger years we've been with conquest blest,
And Paris has the British yoke confess'd;
Is't then in England, in bless'd England known,
Her kings are nam'd from a revolted throne?
But we offend—You no examples need;
In imitation of yourselves proceed;
'Tis you your country's honour must secure;
Be all your actions worthy of Namur:
With gentle fires your gallantry improve;
Courage is brutal, if untouch'd with love.
If soon our utmost bravery's not display'd,
Think that bright circle must be captives made;
Let thoughts of saving them our toils beguile,
And they reward our labours with a smile.

THE

TENDER HUSBAND;

OR, THE

ACCOMPLISHED FOOLS.

BY

STEELE.

PROLOGUE.

BY MR ADDISON.

In the first rise and infancy of farce,
When fools were many, and when plays were scarce,
The raw, unpractis'd authors could with ease
A young and unexperienc'd audience please:
No single character had e'er been shown,
But the whole herd of fops was all their own;
Rich in originals, they set to view,
In every piece, a coxcomb that was new.

But now our British Theatres can boast
Drolls of all kinds, a vast unthinking host!
Fruitful of folly and of vice, it shows
Cuckolds, and cits, and bawds, and pimps, and beaux;
Rough country knights are found of every shire,
Of every fashion gentle fops appear;
And punks of different characters we meet,
As frequent on the stage as in the pit:
Our modern wits are forc'd to pick and cull,
And here and there by chance glean up a fool:
Long ere they find the necessary spark,
They search the town, and beat about the Park:
To all his most frequented haunts resort,
Oft dog him to the ring, and oft to court;
As love of pleasure, or of place, invites:
And sometimes catch him taking snuff at White's.

Howe'er, to do you right, the present age
Breeds very hopeful monsters for the stage,
That scorn the paths their dull forefathers trod,
And won't be blockheads in the common road.
Do but survey this crowded house to-night:
—Here's still encouragement for those that write.

Our author, to divert his friends to-day,
Stocks with variety of fools his play;
And that there may be something gay, and new,
Two ladies errant has expos'd to view:
The first a damsel, travell'd in romance;
The t'other more refin'd; she comes from France:
Rescue, like courteous knights, the nymph from danger,
And kindly treat, like well-bred men, the stranger.

A SONG.

Designed for the FOURTH ACT, but not set.

See, Britons, see with awful eyes,
Britannia from her seas arise!
" Ten thousand billows round me roar
  While winds and waves engage,
That break in froth upon my shore
  And impotently rage.
Such were the terrors, which of late
Surrounded my afflicted state;
  United fury thus was bent
On my devoted seats,
  'Till all the mighty force was spent
In feeble swells and empty threats.

" But now with rising glory crown'd,
My joys run high, they know no bound;
  Tides of unruly pleasure flow
Through every swelling vein,
  New raptures in my bosom glow,
And warm me up to youth again.
  Passing pomps my streets adorn;
  Captive spoils in triumph born.

" Standards of Gauls, in fight subdued,
Colours in hostile blood imbrued,
  Ensigns of tyrannic might,
  Foes to equity and right,
In courts of British justice wave on high,
Sacred to law and liberty.
My crowded Theatres repeat,
In songs of triumph, the defeat.

  Did ever joyful mother see
  So bright, so brave a progeny!
  Daughters with so much beauty crown'd,
  Or sons for valour so renown'd!

" But, Oh, I gaze and seek in vain
To find amidst this warlike train,
My absent sons, that us'd to grace
With decent pride this joyous place:
Unhappy youths! How do my sorrows rise,
Swell my breast and melt my eyes,
  While I your mighty loss deplore.
Wild and raging with distress
I mourn, I mourn my own success,
  And boast my victories no more.
Unhappy youths! far from their native sky,
On Danube's banks interr'd they lie.
Germania, give me back my slain,
Give me my slaughter'd sons again.
Was it for this they rang'd so far,
To free thee from oppressive war!
  Germania, &c.

" Tears of sorrow while I shed,
O'er the manes of my dead,
Lasting altars let me raise
To my living heroes' praise;
Heaven give them a longer stay,
As glorious actions to display,
Or perish on as great a day."

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Sir HARRY GUBBIN.
HUMPHRY GUBBIN.
Mr TIPKIN.
CLERIMONT, *Sen.*
Captain CLERIMONT.
Mr POUNCE.

WOMEN.

Mrs CLERIMONT.
Aunt.
Niece.
FAINLOVE.
JENNY, *Maid to Mrs Clerimont.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Park.*

Enter CLERIMONT, *Sen. and* FAINLOVE.

Cler. Sen. Well, Mr Fainlove, how do you go on in your amour with my wife?

Fain. I am very civil, and very distant; if she smiles or speaks, I bow and gaze at her—Then throw down my eyes, as if oppressed by fear of offence, then steal a look again, till she again sees me—This is my general method.

Cler. Sen. And 'tis right—For such a fine lady has no guard to her virtue, but her pride; therefore, you must constantly apply yourself to that: But dear Lucy, as you have been a very faithful, but a very costly wench to me, so my spouse also has been constant to my bed, but careless of my fortune.

Fain. Ah! my dear, how could you leave your poor Lucy, and run into France to see sights, and show your gallantry with a wife? Was not that unnatural?

Cler. Sen. She brought me a noble fortune, and I thought she had a right to share it: therefore carried her to see the world, forsooth, and make the tour of France and Italy, where she learned to lose her money gracefully, to admire every vanity in our sex, and contemn every virtue in her own; which, with ten thousand other perfections, are the ordinary improvements of a travell'd lady. Now I can neither mortify her vanity, that I may live at ease with her, or quite discard her, till I have catch'd her a little enlarging her innocent freedoms, as she calls 'em: for this end I am content to be a French husband, though now and then with the secret pangs of an Italian one; and therefore, sir, or madam, you are thus equipt to attend and accost her ladyship: it concerns you to be diligent: if we wholly part—I need say no more: if we do not—I'll see thee well provided for.

Fain. I'll do all I can, I warrant you, but you are not to expect I'll go much among the men.

Cler. Sen. No, no, you must not go near men, you are only (when my wife goes to a play) to sit in a side-box with pretty fellows—I don't design you to personate a real man, you are only to be a pretty gentleman——Not to be of any use or consequence in the world, as to yourself, but merely as a property to others; such as you see now and then have a life in the entail of a great estate, and seem to have come into the world only to be tags in the pedigree of a wealthy house.—You must have seen many of that species.

Fain. I apprehend you; such as stand in assemblies, with an indolent softness and contempt of all around 'em; who make a figure in public, and are scorn'd in private: I have seen such a one with a pocket glass to see his own face, and an affected perspective to know others.

[*Imitates each.*

Cler. Sen. Ay, ay, that's my man—Thou dear rogue!

Fain. Let me alone—I'll lay my life I'll horn you, that is, I'll make it appear I might if I could.

Cler. Sen. Ay, that will please me quite as well.

Fain. To shew you the progress I have made, I last night won of her five hundred pounds, which I have brought you safe.

[*Giving him bills.*

Cler. Sen. Oh the damned vice! That women can imagine all household care, regard to posterity, and fear of poverty, must be sacrificed to a game at cards—Suppose she had not had it to pay, and you had been capable of finding your account another way—

Fain. That's but a suppose——

Cler. Sen. I say, she must have complied with every thing you ask'd——

Fain. But she knows you never limit her expences—I'll gain him from her for ever if I can.

[*Aside.*

Cler. Sen. With this you have repaid me two thousand pounds, and if you did not refund this honestly, I could not have supplied her——We must have parted.

Fain. Then you shall part—if t'other way fails. [*Aside.*] However, I cann't blame your fondness of her, she has so many entertaining qualities with her vanity—Then she has such a pretty unthinking air, while she saunters round a room, and prattles sentences—

Cler. Sen. That was her turn from her infancy; she always had a great genius for knowing every thing but what it was necessary she should—The wits of the age, the great beauties, and short-lived people of vogue, were always her discourse and imitation—Thus the case stood when she went to France; but her fine follies improved so daily, that, though I was then proud of her being call'd Mr Clerimont's wife, I am now as much out of countenance to hear myself called Mrs Clerimont's husband, so much is the superiority of her side.

Fain. I am sure if ever I gave myself a little liberty, I never found you so indulgent.

Cler. Sen. I should have the whole sex on my back, should I pretend to retrench a lady so well visited as mine is—Therefore I must bring it about, that it shall appear her own act, if she reforms; or else I shall be pronounc'd jealous, and have my eyes pull'd out for being open—But I hear my brother Jack coming, who, I hope, has brought yours with him——Hist, not a word.

Enter Captain CLERIMONT *and* POUNCE.

Capt. I have found him out at last, brother, and brought you the obsequious Mr Pounce; I saw him at a distance in a crowd, whispering in their turns with all about him—He is a gentleman so received, so courted, and so trusted——

Pounce. I am very glad if you saw any thing like that, if the approbation of others can recommend me (where I much more desired it) to this company—

Capt. Oh, the civil person—But, dear Pounce, you know I am your professed admirer; I always celebrated you for your excellent skill and address, for that happy knowledge of the world, which makes you seem born for living with the persons you are with, wherever you come—— Now, my brother and I want your help, in a business that requires a little more dexterity than we ourselves are masters of.

Pounce. You know, sir, my character is helping the distressed, which I do freely, and without reserve; while others are for distinguishing rigidly on the justice of the occasion, and so lose the grace of the benefit——Now 'tis my profession to assist a free-hearted young fellow, against an unnatural long-lived father—to disencumber men of pleasure of the vexation of unwieldy estates, to support a feeble title to an inheritance, to——

Cler. Sen. I have been well acquainted with your merits ever since I saw you, with so much compassion, prompt a stammering witness in Westminster-hall——that wanted instruction—I love a man that can venture his ears with so much bravery for his friend.

Pounce Dear sir, spare my modesty, and let me know to what all this panegyric tends.

Cler. Sen. Why, sir, what I would say is in behalf of my brother the captain here, whose misfortune it is that I was born before him.

Pounce. I am confident he had rather you should have been so, than any other man in England.

Capt. You do me justice, Mr Pounce——But though 'tis to that gentleman, I am still a younger brother, and you know we that are so, are generally condemn'd to shops, colleges, or inns of court.

Pounce. But you, sir, have escap'd 'em; you have been trading in the noble mart of glory——

Capt. That's true—but the general makes such haste to finish the war, that we red coats may be soon out of fashion—and then I am a fellow of the most easy, indolent disposition in the world; I hate all manner of business.

Pounce. A composed temper, indeed!

Capt. In such a case, I should have no way of livelihood, but calling over this gentleman's dogs in the country, drinking his stale beer to the neighbourhood, or marrying a fortune.

Cler. Sen. To be short, Pounce——I am putting Jack upon marriage; and you are so public an envoy, or rather plenipotentiary, from the very different nations of Cheapside, Covent-Garden, and St James's; you have, too, the mien and language of each place so naturally, that you are the properest instrument I know in the world, to help an honest young fellow to favour in one of 'em, by credit in the other.

Pounce. By what I understand of your many prefaces, gentlemen, the purpose of all this is—That it would not in the least discompose this gentleman's easy, indolent disposition, to fall into twenty thousand pounds, though it came upon him never so suddenly.

Capt. You are a very discerning man——How could you see so far through me, as to know I love a fine woman, pretty equipage, good company, and a clean habitation?

Pounce. Well, though I am so much a conjuror—What then?

Cler. Sen. You know a certain person, into whose hands you now and then recommend a young heir, to be relieved from the vexation of tenants, taxes, and so forth——

Pounce. What! my worthy friend, and city patron, Hezekiah Tipkin, banker, in Lombard-street! would the noble captain lay any sums in his hands?

Capt. No—But the noble captain would have treasure out of his hands—You know his niece.

Pounce. To my knowledge, ten thousand pounds in money.

Capt. Such a stature! such a blooming countenance! so easy a shape!

Pounce. In jewels of her grandmother's, five thousand—

Capt. Her wit so lively, her mien so alluring!

Pounce. In land a thousand a-year.

Capt. Her lips have that certain prominence, that swelling softness, that they invite to a pressure; her eyes that languish, that they give pain, though they look only inclined to rest——Her whole person that one charm——

Pounce. Raptures! raptures!

Capt. How can it, so insensibly to itself, lead us through cares it knows not, through such a wilderness of hopes, fears, joys, sorrows, desires, despairs, ecstacies, and torments, with so sweet, yet so anxious vicissitude!

Pounce. Why, I thought you had never seen her——

Capt. No more I ha'n't.

Pounce. Who told you, then, of her inviting lips, her soft sleepy eyes?——

Capt. You, yourself.

Pounce. Sure you rave; I never spoke of her before to you.

Capt. Why, you won't face me down—Did you not just now say, she had ten thousand pounds in money, five in jewels, and a thousand a-year?

Pounce. I confess my own stupidity, and her charms—Why, if you were to meet, you would certainly please her; you have the cant of loving; but, pray, may we be free—That young gentleman—

Capt. A very honest, modest gentleman of my acquaintance: one that has much more in

him than he appears to have; you shall know him better, sir; this is Mr Pounce. Mr Pounce, this is Mr Fainlove; I must desire you to let him be known to you, and your friends.

Pounce. I shall be proud—Well, then, since we may be free, you must understand, the young lady, by being kept from the world, has made a world of her own.—She has spent all her solitude in reading romances; her head is full of shepherds, knights, flowery meads, groves, and streams; so that if you talk like a man of this world to her, you do nothing.

Capt. Oh, let me alone—I have been a great traveller in fairy land myself; I know Oroondates, Cassandra; Astrea and Clelia are my intimate acquaintance.

Go, my heart's envoys, tender sighs make haste,
And with your breath swell the soft zephyr's blast:
Then near that fair one, if you chance to fly,
Tell her, in whispers, 'tis for her I die.

Pounce. That would do, that would do——her very language.

Cler. Sen. Why then, dear Pounce, I know thou art the only man living that can serve him.

Pounce. Gentlemen, you must pardon me, I am soliciting the marriage settlement between her and a country booby, her cousin, Humphry Gubbin, Sir Harry's heir, who is come to town to take possession of her.

Cler. Sen. Well, all that I can say to the matter is, that a thousand pounds on the day of Jack's marriage to her, is more than you'll get by the dispatch of those deeds.

Pounce. Why, a thousand pounds is a pretty thing, especially when 'tis to take a lady fair out of the hands of an obstinate ill-bred clown, to give her to a gentle swain, a dying enamour'd knight.

Cler. Sen. Ay, dear Pounce—consider but that—the justice of the thing.

Pounce. Besides, he is just come from the glorious Blenheim!——Look ye, captain, I hope you have learn'd an implicit obedience to your leaders.

Capt. 'Tis all I know.

Pounce. Then, if I am to command—make no one step without me—And since we may be free—I am also to acquaint you, there will be more merit in bringing this matter to bear than you imagine—Yet right measures make all things possible.

Capt. We'll follow yours exactly.

Pounce. But the great matter against us is want of time, for the nymph's uncle, and 'squire's father, this morning met, and made an end of the matter—But the difficulty of a thing, captain, shall be no reason against attempting it.

Capt. I have so great an opinion of your conduct, that I warrant you we conquer all.

Pounce. I am so intimately employ'd by old Tipkin, and so necessary to him, that I may, perhaps, puzzle things yet.

Cler. Sen. I have seen thee cajole the knave very dexterously.

Pounce. Why, really, sir, generally speaking, 'tis but knowing what a man thinks of himself, and giving him that, to make him what else you please——Now Tipkin is an absolute Lombard-street wit, a fellow that drolls on the strength of fifty thousand pounds: he is called on 'Change, Sly-boots, and by the force of a very good credit, and very bad conscience, he is a leading person: but we must be quick, or he'll sneer old Sir Harry out of his senses, and strike up the sale of his niece immediately.

Capt. But my rival, what's he?

Pounce. There's some hopes there, for I hear the booby is as averse, as his father is inclined to it—One is as obstinate, as the other is cruel.

Cler. Sen. He is, they say, a pert blockhead, and very lively out of his father's sight.

Pounce. He that gave me his character, call'd him a docile dunce, a fellow rather absurd, than a direct fool—When his father's absent, he'll pursue any thing he's put upon—But we must not lose time—Pray be you two brothers at home to wait for any notice from me—While that pretty gentleman and I, whose face I have known, take a walk and look about for 'em—So, so—Young lady——[*Aside to* FAINLOVE.]

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Sir HARRY GUBBIN *and* TIPKIN.

Sir Har. Look ye, brother Tipkin, as I told you before, my business in town is to dispose of an hundred head of cattle, and my son.

Tip. Brother Gubbin, as I signified to you in my last, bearing date Sept. 13th, my niece has a thousand pounds per annum, and because I have found you a plain dealing man, (particularly in the easy pad you put into my hands last summer,) I was willing you should have the refusal of my niece, provided that I have a discharge from all retrospects while her guardian, and one thousand pounds for my care.

Sir Har. Ay, but, brother, you rate her too high, the war has fetch'd down the price of women: the whole nation is over-run with petticoats; our daughters lie upon our hands, brother Tipkin; girls are drugs, sir, mere drugs.

Tip. Look ye, Sir Harry—Let girls be what they will—a thousand pounds a-year, is a thousand pounds a-year; and a thousand pounds a-year is neither girl nor boy.

Sir Har. Look ye, Mr Tipkin, the main article with me is, that foundation of wives' rebellion, and husbands' cuckoldom, that cursed pin-money—Five hundred pounds per annum pin-money.

Tip. The word pin-money, Sir Harry, is a term—

Sir Har. It is a term, brother, we never had in our family, nor ever will—make her jointure in widowhood accordingly large, but four hundred pounds a-year is enough to give no account of.

Tip. Well, Sir Harry, since you cann't swallow these pins, I will abate to four hundred pounds.

Sir Har. And to mollify the article—as well as specify the uses, we'll put in the names of several female utensils, as needles, knitting-needles, tape, thread, scissars, bodkins, fans, play-books, with other toys of that nature. And now since we have as good as concluded the marriage, it will not be improper that the young people see each other.

Tip. I don't think it prudent till the very instant of marriage, lest they should not like one another.

Sir Har. They shall meet——As for the young girl, she cannot dislike Numps; and for Numps, I never suffered him to have any thing he liked in his life. He'll be here immediately; he has been train'd up from his childhood under such a plant as this in my hand——I have taken pains in his education.

Tip. Sir Harry, I approve your method: for since you have left off hunting, you might otherwise want exercise, and this is a subtile expedient to preserve your own health, and your son's good manners.

Sir Har. It has been the custom of the Gubbins to preserve severity and discipline in their families—I myself was caned the day before my wedding.

Tip. Ay, Sir Harry, had you not been well cudgelled in youth, you had never been the man you are.

Sir Har. You say right, now I feel the benefit of it——There's a crab-tree, near our house, which flourishes for the good of my posterity, and has brush'd our jackets, from father to son, for several generations——

Tip. I am glad to hear you have all things necessary for the family within yourselves——

Sir Har. Oh! yonder, I see Numps is coming ——I have dressed him in the very suit I had on at my own wedding; 'tis a most becoming apparel.

Enter HUMPHRY GUBBIN.

Tip. Truly, the youth makes a good marriageable figure.

Sir Har. Come forward, Numps, this is your uncle Tipkin, your mother's brother, Numps, that is so kind as to bestow his niece upon you. (Don't be so glum, sirrah.) Don't bow to a man, with a face as if you'd knock him down, don't, sirrah.

Tip. I am glad to see you, cousin Humphry—He is not talkative, I observe already.

Sir Har. He is very shrewd, sir, when he pleases. Do you see this crab-stick, you dog? [*Apart.*] Well, Numps, don't be out of humour. Will you talk? [*Apart.*] Come, we're your friends, Numps, come, lad.

Humph. You are a pure fellow for a father. This is always your trick, to make a great fool of one before company. [*Apart to his father.*

Sir Har. Don't disgrace me, sirrah: you grim graceless rogue. [*Apart.*]—Brother, he has been bred up to respect and silence before his parents ——Yet did you but hear what a noise he makes sometimes in the kitchen, or the kennel, he's the loudest of 'em all.

Tip. Well, Sir Harry, since you assure me he can speak, I'll take your word for it.

Humph. I can speak when I see occasion, and I can hold my tongue when I see occasion.

Sir Har. Well said, Numps—sirrah, I see you can do well if you will. [*Apart.*]

Tip. Pray walk up to me, cousin Humphry.

Sir Har. Ay, walk to and fro between us, with your hat under your arm. Clear up your countenance. [*Apart.*]

Tip. I see, Sir Harry, you ha'n't set him a capering under a French dancing-master: he does not mince it: he has not learn'd to walk by a courant, or a boree——His paces are natural, Sir Harry.

Humph. I don't know but 'tis, so we walk in the west of England.

Sir Har. Ay, right, Numps, and so we do—Ha, ha, ha! Pray, brother, observe his make, none of your lath-back'd wishy-washy breed—come hither, Numps. Cann't you stand still? [*Apart, measuring his shoulders.*

Tip. I presume this is not the first time, Sir Harry, you have measured his shoulders with your cane.

Sir Har. Look ye, brother, two feet and an half in the shoulders.

Tip. Two feet and an half! we must make some settlement on the younger children.

Sir Har. Not like him, quoth-a!

Tip. He may see his cousin when he pleases.

Humph. But hark ye, uncle, I have a scruple I had better mention before marriage than after.

Tip. What's that, what's that?

Humph. My cousin, you know, is a-kin to me, and I don't think it lawful for a young man to marry his own relations.

Sir Har. Hark ye, hark ye, Numps, we have got a way to solve all that: sirrah, consider this cudgel! Your cousin! Suppose I'd have you marry your grandmother; what then? [*Apart.*]

Tip. Well, has your father satisfied you in the point, Mr Humphry?

Humph. Ay, ay, sir, very well: I have not the least scruple remaining; no, no—not in the least, sir.

Tip. Then hark ye, brother; we'll go take a whet, and settle the whole affair.

Sir Har. Come, we'll leave Numps here—— he knows the way. Not marry your own relations, sirrah! [*Apart.*]

[*Exeunt Sir* HARRY *and* TIPKIN.

Humph. Very fine, very fine; how prettily this park is stock'd with soldiers, and deer, and ducks, and ladies——Ha! where are the old fellows gone; where can they be, tro'——I'll ask these people——

Enter POUNCE *and* FAINLOVE.

Humph. Ha, you pretty young gentleman, did you see my father?

Fain. Your father, sir?

Humph. A weezel-faced cross old gentleman, with spindle shanks.

Fain. No, sir.

Humph. A crab-tree stick in his hand?

Pounce. We ha'n't met any body with these marks, but sure I have seen you before——Are not you Mr Humphry Gubbin, son and heir to Sir Henry Gubbin?

Humph. I am his son and heir——But how long I shall be so, I cann't tell, for he talks every day of disinheriting me.

Pounce. Dear sir, let me embrace you——Nay, don't be offended if I take the liberty to kiss you; Mr Fainlove, pray [FAINLOVE *kisses*] kiss the gentleman—Nay, dear sir, don't stare and be surprised, for I have had a desire to be better known to you ever since I saw you one day clench your fist at your father, when his back was turn'd upon you——For, I must own, I very much admire a young gentleman of spirit.

Humph. Why, sir, would it not vex a man to the heart, to have an old fool snubbing a body every minute afore company——

Pounce. Oh fie, he uses you like a boy.

Humph. Like a boy! He lays on me, now and then, as if I were one of his hounds—You cann't think what a rage he was in this morning because I boggled a little at marrying my own cousin.

Pounce. A man cann't be too scrupulous, Mr Humphry; a man cann't be too scrupulous.

Humph. Sir, I could as soon love my own flesh and blood, we should squabble like brother and sister; do you think we should not, Mr——? Pray, gentlemen, may I crave the favour of your names?

Pounce. Sir, I am the very person that have been employed to draw up the articles of marriage between you and your cousin.

Humph. Ay, say you so? Then you can inform me in some things concerning myself?—Pray, sir, what estate am I heir to?

Pounce. To fifteen hundred pounds a-year, an entailed estate——

Humph. I am glad to hear it with all my heart; and can you satisfy me in another question——Pray how old am I at present?

Pounce. Three-and-twenty last March.

Humph. Why, as sure as you are there they have kept me back. I have been told by some of the neighbourhood, that I was born the very year the pigeon-house was built, and every body knows the pigeon-house is three-and-twenty—Why, I find there has been tricks play'd me; I have obey'd him all along, as if I had been obliged to it.

Pounce. Not at all, sir; your father cann't cut you out of one acre of fifteen hundred pounds a-year.

Humph. What a fool have I been to give him his head so long!

Pounce. A man of your beauty and fortune may find out ladies enough that are not a-kin to you.

Humph. Look ye, Mr What-d'ye-call—As to my beauty, I don't know but they may take a liking to that—But, sir, mayn't I crave your name?

Pounce. My name, sir, is Pounce, at your service.

Humph. Pounce, with a P?

Pounce. Yes, sir, and Samuel with an S.

Humph. Why, then, Mr Samuel Pounce, do you know any gentlewoman that you think I could like? For, to tell you truly, I took an antipathy to my cousin ever since my father proposed her to me—And, since every body knows I came up to be married, I don't care to go down and look baulk'd.

Pounce. I have a thought just come into my head——Do you see this young gentleman? he has a sister, a prodigious fortune—'faith you two shall be acquainted——

Fain. I cann't pretend to expect so accomplish'd a gentleman as Mr Humphry for my sister! but, being your friend, I'll be at his service in the affair.

Humph. If I had your sister, she and I should live like two turtles.

Pounce. Mr Humphry, you sha'n't be fool'd any longer. I'll carry you into company; Mr Fainlove, you shall introduce him to Mrs Clerimont's toilet.

Fain. She'll be highly taken with him, for she loves a gentleman whose manner is particular.

Pounce. What, sir, a person of your pretensions, a clear estate, no portions to pay! 'Tis barbarous, your treatment—Mr Humphry, I'm afraid you want money—There's for you—What, a man of your accomplishments!

[*Giving a purse.*

Humph. And yet you see, sir, how they use me—Dear sir, you are the best friend I ever met with in all my life—Now, I am flush of money, bring me to your sister, and I warrant you for my behaviour—A man's quite another thing with money in his pocket—you know.

Pounce. How little the oaf wonders why I should give him money!—You shall never want, Mr Humphry, while I have it—Mr Humphry; but, dear friend, I must take my leave of you, I have some extraordinary business on my hands; I cann't stay; but you must not say a word——

Fain. But you must be in the way half an hour hence, and I'll introduce you at Mrs Clerimont's.

Pounce. Make 'em believe you are willing to have your cousin Bridget, 'till opportunity serves: Farewell, dear friend.

[*Exeunt* POUNCE *and* FAINLOVE.

Humph. Farewell, good Mr Samuel Pounce—But let's see my cash——'Tis very true, the old saying, a man meets with more friendship from strangers than his own relations——Let's see my cash: 1, 2, 3, 4, there on that side—1, 2, 3, 4, on that side; 'tis a foolish thing to put all one's

money in one pocket, 'tis like a man's whole estate in one county—These five in my fob—I'll keep these in my hand, lest I should have present occasion—But this town's full of pick-pockets—I'll go home again. [*Exit whistling.*

ACT II.

SCENE I—*Continues.*

Enter POUNCE, *and Captain* CLERIMONT, *with his arm in a scarf.*

Pounce. You are now well enough instructed both in the aunt and niece, to form your behaviour.

Capt. But to talk with her apart is the great matter.

Pounce. The antiquated virgin has a mighty affectation for youth, and is a great lover of men and money—One of these, at least, I am sure I can gratify her in, by turning her pence in the annuities, or the stocks of one of the companies; some way or other I will find to entertain her, and engage you with the young lady.

Capt. Since that is her ladyship's turn, so busy and fine a gentleman as Mr Pounce must needs be in her good graces.

Pounce. So shall you too—But you must not be seen with me at first meeting; I'll dog 'em, while you watch at a distance. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Aunt and Niece.

Niece. Was it not my gallant that whistled so charmingly in the parlour before he went out this morning? He's a most accomplish'd cavalier.

Aunt. Come, niece, come—You don't do well to make sport with your relations, especially with a young gentleman that has so much kindness for you.

Niece. Kindness for me! What a phrase is there to express the darts and flames, the sighs and languishings of an expecting lover!

Aunt. Pray, niece, forbear this idle trash, and talk like other people. Your cousin Humphry will be true and hearty in what he says, and that's a great deal better than the talk and compliment of romances.

Niece. Good madam, don't wound my ears with such expressions. Do you think I can ever love a man that's true and hearty? What a peasant-like amour do these coarse words import! True and hearty! Pray, aunt, endeavour a little at the embellishment of your style.

Aunt. Alack-a-day, cousin Biddy, these idle romances have quite turn'd your head.

Niece. How often must I desire you, madam, to lay aside that familiar name, cousin Biddy? I never hear it without blushing—Did you ever meet with an heroine, in those idle romances as you call 'em, that was term'd Biddy?

Aunt. Ah! cousin, cousin—These are mere vapours, indeed—Nothing but vapours—

Niece. No, the heroine has always something soft and engaging in her name—Something that gives us a notion of the sweetness of her beauty and behaviour. A name that glides through half a dozen tender syllables, as Elismunda, Clidamira, Deidamia; that runs upon vowels off the tongue, not hissing through one's teeth, or breaking them with consonants.——'Tis strange rudeness those familiar names they give us, when there is Aurelia, Saccharissa, Gloriana, for people of condition; and Celia, Chloris, Corinna, Mopsa, for their maids and those of lower rank.

Aunt. Look ye, Biddy, this is not to be supported—I know not where you learn'd this nicety; but I can tell you, forsooth, as much as you despise it, your mother was a Bridget afore you, and an excellent housewife.

Niece. Good madam, don't upbraid me with my mother Bridget, and an excellent housewife.

Aunt. Yes, I say, she was, and spent her time in better learning than ever you did—not in reading of fights and battles of dwarfs and giants; but in writing out receipts for broths, possets, caudles, and surfeit-waters, as became a good country gentlewoman.

Niece. My mother and a Bridget!

Aunt. Yes, niece, I say again your mother, my sister, was a Bridget! the daughter of her mother Margery, of her mother Cicely, of her mother Alice.

Niece. Have you no mercy? O, the barbarous genealogy!

Aunt. Of her mother Winifred, of her mother Joan.

Niece. Since you will run on, then I must needs tell you I am not satisfied in the point of my nativity. Many an infant has been placed in a cottage with obscure parents, 'till by chance some ancient servant of the family has known it by its marks.

Aunt. Ay, you had best be search'd——That's like your calling the winds the fanning gales, before I don't know how much company; and the tree that was blown by it, had, forsooth, a spirit imprison'd in the trunk of it.

Niece. Ignorance!

Aunt. Then a cloud this morning had a flying dragon in it.

Niece. What eyes had you that you could see nothing? For my part, I look upon it to be a prodigy, and expect something extraordinary will happen to me before night—— But you have a gross relish of things. What noble descriptions in romances had been lost, if the writers had been persons of your *goût*?

Aunt. I wish the authors had been hang'd, and their books burnt, before you had seen 'em.

Niece. Simplicity!

Aunt. A parcel of improbable lies.

Niece. Indeed, madam, your raillery is coarse.

Aunt. Fit only to corrupt young girls, and fill their heads with a thousand foolish dreams of I don't know what.

Niece. Nay, now, madam, you grow extravagant.

Aunt. What I say is not to vex, but advise you for your good.

Niece. What, to burn Philocles, Artaxerxes, Oroondates, and the rest of the heroic lovers, and take my country booby, cousin Humphry, for an husband!

Aunt. Oh dear, oh dear, Biddy! Pray, good dear, learn to speak and act like the rest of the world; come, come, you shall marry your cousin, and live comfortably.

Niece. Live comfortably! What kind of life is that? A great heiress live comfortably! Pray, aunt, learn to raise your ideas——What is, I wonder, to live comfortably?

Aunt. To live comfortably, is to live with prudence and frugality, as we do in Lombard-street.

Niece. As we do——That's a fine life indeed, with one servant of each sex——Let's see how many things our coachman is good for——He rubs down his horses, lays the cloth, whets the knives, and sometimes makes beds.

Aunt. A good servant should turn his hand to every thing in a family.

Niece. Nay, there's not a creature in our family, that has not two or three different duties: as John is butler, footman, and coachman; so Mary is cook, laundress, and chamber-maid.

Aunt. Well, and do you laugh at that?

Niece. No—not I—nor at the coach horses, though one has an easy trot for my uncle's riding, and t'other an easy pace for your side-saddle.

Aunt. And so you jeer at the good-management of your relations, do you?

Niece. No, I'm well satisfied that all the house are creatures of business; but, indeed, was in hopes that my poor lap-dog might have lived with me upon my fortune without an employment; but my uncle threatens every day to make him a turnspit, that he too, in his sphere, may help us to live comfortably.

Aunt. Hark ye, cousin Biddy.

Niece. I vow I'm out of countenance, when our butler, with his careful face, drives us all stowed in a chariot drawn by one horse ambling, and t'other trotting with his provisions behind for the family, from Saturday night till Monday morning, bound for Hackney—Then we make a comfortable figure indeed.

Aunt. So we do, and so will you always, if you marry your cousin Humphry.

Niece. Name not the creature.

Aunt. Creature! what, your own cousin a creature!

Niece. Oh, let's be going, I see yonder another creature that does my uncle's law business, and has, I believe, made ready the deeds, those barbarous deeds.

Aunt. What, Mr Pounce a creature too! Nay, now I'm sure you're ignorant—You shall stay, and you'll learn more wit from him in an hour, than in a thousand of your foolish books in an age—Your servant, Mr Pounce.

Enter POUNCE.

Pounce. Ladies, I hope I don't interrupt any private discourse.

Aunt. Not in the least, sir.

Pounce. I should be loath to be esteemed one of those who think they have a privilege of mixing in all companies, without any business, but to bring forth a loud laugh, or vain jest.

Niece. He talks with the mien and gravity of a Paladin. [*Aside.*

Pounce. Madam, I bought the other day at three and an half, and sold at seven.

Aunt. Then pray, sir, sell for me in time. Niece, mind him: he has an infinite deal of wit—

Pounce. This that I speak of was for you—— I never neglect such opportunities to serve my friends.

Aunt. Indeed, Mr Pounce, you are, I protest, without flattery, the wittiest man in the world.

Pounce. I assure you, madam, I said last night before an hundred head of citizens, that Mrs Barsheba Tipkin was the most ingenious young lady in the liberties.

Aunt. Well, Mr Pounce, you are so facetious —But you are always among the great ones—— 'Tis no wonder you have it.

Niece. Idle! Idle!

Pounce. But, madam, you know Alderman Grey-Goose, he's a notable joking man—Well, says he, here's Mrs Barsheba's health—She's my mistress.

Aunt. That man makes me split my sides with laughing, he's such a wag—(Mr Pounce pretends Grey-Goose said all this, but I know 'tis his own wit, for he's in love with me.) [*Apart.*

Pounce. But, madam, there's a certain affair I should communicate to you. [*Apart.*

Aunt. Ay, 'tis certainly so—He wants to break his mind to me.

[*Captain* CLERIMONT *passing*

Pounce. Oh, Captain Clerimont, Captain Clerimont.——Ladies, pray let me introduce this young gentleman; he's my friend, a youth of great virtue and goodness, for all he is in a red coat.

Aunt. If he's your friend, we need not doubt his virtue.

Capt. Ladies, you are taking the cool breath of the morning.

Niece. A pretty phrase. [*Aside.*

Aunt. That's the pleasantest time, this warm weather.

Capt. Oh, 'tis the season of the pearly dews, and gentle zephyrs.

Niece. Ay! pray mind that again, aunt. [*Aside.*

Pounce. Sha'n't we repose ourselves on yonder seat? I love improving company, and to communicate.

Aunt. 'Tis certainly so——He's in love with me, and wants opportunity to tell me so—I don't care if we do——He's a most ingenious man. [*Aside.*

[*Exeunt Aunt and* POUNCE.

Capt. We enjoy here, madam, all the pretty landscapes of the country, without the pains of going thither.

Niece. Art and nature are in rivalry, or rather confederacy, to adorn this beauteous park with all the agreeable variety of water, shade, walks, and air.—What can be more charming than these flowery lawns?

Capt. Or these gloomy shades?

Niece. Or these embroider'd valleys?

Capt. Or that transparent stream?

Niece. Or these bowing branches on the banks of it, that seem to admire their own beauty in the crystal mirror?

Capt. I am surprised, madam, at the delicacy of your phrase——Can such expressions come from Lombard-street?

Niece. Alas! sir, what can be expected from an innocent virgin, that has been immured almost one-and-twenty years from the conversation of mankind, under the care of an Urganda of an aunt?

Capt. Bless me, madam, how have you been abused! many a lady before your age has had an hundred lances broken in her service, and as many dragons cut to pieces in honour of her.

Niece. Oh, the charming man! [*Aside.*

Capt. Do you believe Pamela was one-and-twenty before she knew Musidorus?

Niece. I could hear him for ever. [*Aside.*

Capt. A lady of your wit and beauty might have given occasion for a whole romance in folio before that age.

Niece. Oh, the powers! Who can he be? Oh, youth unknown! But let me, in the first place, know whom I talk to, for, sir, I am wholly unacquainted both with your person and your history—You seem, indeed, by your deportment, and the distinguishing mark of your bravery which you bear, to have been in a conflict—May I not know what cruel beauty obliged you to such adventures, till she pitied you?

Capt. Oh, the pretty coxcomb! [*Aside.*] Oh, Blenheim! Oh, Cordelia, Cordelia!

Niece. You mention the place of battle—I would fain hear an exact description of it—Our public papers are so defective, they don't so much as tell us how the sun rose that glorious day——Were there not a great many flights of vultures before the battle began?

Capt. Oh, madam, they have eaten up half my acquaintance.

Niece. Certainly never birds of prey were so feasted—By report, they might have lived half a year on the very legs and arms our troops left behind 'em.

Capt. Had we not fought near a wood, we should ne'er have got legs enough to have come home upon. The joiner of the Foot Guards has made his fortune by it.

Niece. I shall never forgive your general—He has put all my ancient heroes out of countenance; he has pulled down Cyrus and Alexander, as much as Louis le Grand—But your own part in that action?

Capt. Only that slight hurt, for the astrologer said at my nativity—Nor fire, nor sword, nor pike, nor musket shall destroy this child, let him but avoid fair eyes—But, madam, mayn't I crave the name of her that has captivated my heart?

Niece. I cann't guess whom you mean by that description; but if you ask my name—I must confess you put me upon revealing what I always keep as the greatest secret I have—for, would you believe it—they have call'd me—I don't know how to own it, but have call'd me—Bridget.

Capt. Bridget?

Niece. Bridget.

Capt. Bridget?

Niece. Spare my confusion, I beseech you, sir, and if you have occasion to mention me, let it be by Parthenissa; for that's the name I have assumed ever since I came to years of discretion.

Capt. The insupportable tyranny of parents, to fix names on helpless infants which they must blush at all their lives after! I don't think there's a sirname in the world to match it.

Niece. No? what do you think of Tipkin?

Capt. Tipkin! Why, I think if I was a young lady that had it, I'd part with it immediately.

Niece. Pray, how would you get rid of it?

Capt. I'd change it for another—I could recommend to you three very pretty syllables——What do you think of Clerimont?

Niece. Clerimont! Clerimont! Very well——But what right have I to it?

Capt. If you will give me leave, I'll put you in possession of it. By a very few words I can make it over to you, and your children after you.

Niece. Oh fie! Whither are you running! You know a lover should sigh in private, and languish whole years before he reveals his passion; he should retire into some solitary grove, and make the woods and wild beasts his confidants—You should have told it to the echo half a year before you had discovered it even to my hand-maid. And yet, besides—to talk to me of children—Did you ever hear of an heroine with a big belly?

Capt. What can a lover do, madam, now the race of giants is extinct? Had I lived in those days, there had not been a mortal six feet high, but should have own'd Parthenissa for the paragon of beauty, or measured his length on the ground——Parthenissa should have been heard by the brooks and deserts at midnight—the echo's burden, and the river's murmur.

Niece. That had been a golden age, indeed! But see, my aunt has left her grave companion, and is coming towards us—I command you to leave me.

Capt. Thus Oroondates, when Statira dismiss'd him her presence, threw himself at her feet, and implored permission but to live.

[*Offering to kneel.*

Niece. And thus Statira raised him from the earth, permitting him to live and love.

[*Exit Capt.* CLER.

Enter Aunt.

Aunt. Is not Mr Pounce's conversation very improving, niece?

Niece. Is not Mr Clerimont a very pretty name, aunt?

Aunt. He has so much prudence.

Niece. He has so much gallantry.

Aunt. So sententious in his expressions.

Niece. So polish'd in his language.

Aunt. All he says, is, methinks, so like a sermon.

Niece. All he speaks savours of romance.

Aunt. Romance, niece? Mr Pounce! what savours of romance?

Niece. No, I mean his friend, the accomplished Mr Clerimont.

Aunt. Fie, for one of your years to commend a young fellow!

Niece. One of my years is mightily govern'd by example. You did not dislike Mr Pounce.

Aunt. What, censorious too? I find there is no trusting you out of the house—A moment's fresh air does but make you still the more in love with strangers, and despise your own relations.

Niece. I am certainly by the power of an enchantment placed among you, but I hope I this morning employ'd one to seek adventures, and break the charm.

Aunt. Vapours, Biddy, indeed! Nothing but vapours——Cousin Humphry shall break the charm.

Niece. Name him not——Call me still Biddy, rather than name that brute.

[*Exeunt Aunt and Niece.*

Enter Captain CLERIMONT *and* POUNCE.

Capt. A perfect Quixotte in petticoats! I tell thee, Pounce, she governs herself wholly by romance——It has got into her very blood——She starts by rule, and blushes by example——Could I have produced one instance of a lady's complying at first sight, I should have gained her promise on the spot—How am I bound to curse the cold constitutions of the Philoclea's and Statira's! I am undone for want of precedents.

Pounce. I am sure I labour'd hard to favour your conference; and plied the old woman all the while with something that tickled either her vanity or her covetousness: I consider'd all the stocks, old and new company, her own complexion and youth, partners for sword-blades, chamber of London, banks for charity, and mine adventurers, till she told me I had the repute of the most facetious man that ever came to Garraway's—For you must know, public knaves and stock-jobbers pass for wits at her end of the town, as common cheats and gamesters do at yours.

Capt. I pity the drudgery you have gone through; but what's next to be done towards getting my pretty heroine?

Pounce. What should next be done, in ordinary method of things—You have seen her, the next regular approach is, that you cannot subsist a moment, without sending forth musical complaints of your misfortune, by way of a serenade.

Capt. I can nick you there, sir: I have a scribbling army friend, that has wrote a triumphant, rare, noisy song, in honour of the late victory, that will hit the nymph's fantasque to a hair: I'll get every thing ready as soon as possible.

Pounce. While you are playing upon the fort, I'll be within, and observe what execution you do, and give you intelligence accordingly.

Capt. You must have an eye upon Mr Humphry, while I feed the vanity of Parthenissa—For I am so experienced in these matters, that I know none but coxcombs think to win a woman by any desert of their own. No, it must be done rather by complying with some prevailing humour of your mistress, than exerting any good quality in yourself.

'Tis not the lover's merit wins the field,
But to themselves alone the beauteous yield.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Chamber.*

Enter Mrs CLERIMONT, FAINLOVE, *(carrying her lap-dog,) and* JENNY.

Jen. Madam, the footman that's recommended to you is below, if your ladyship will please to take him.

Mrs Cler. Oh fie; don't believe I'll think on't—It is impossible he should be good for any thing—The English are so saucy with their liberty—I'll have all my lower servants French—There cannot be a good footman born out of an absolute monarchy.

Jen. I'm beholden to your ladyship, for believing so well of the maid-servants in England.

Mrs Cler. Indeed, Jenny, I could wish thou wert really French: for thou art plain English in spite of example—Your arms do but hang on, and you move perfectly upon joints—Not with a swim of the whole person—But I am talking to you, and have not adjusted myself to-day: what pretty company a glass is, to have another self! [*Kisses the dog.*] The converse is soliloquy! To

have company that never contradicts or displeases us! The pretty visible echo of our actions. [*Kisses the dog.*] How easy, too, it is to be disencumber'd with stays, where a woman has any thing like shape; if no shape, a good air—But I look best when I'm talking.

[*Kisses the lap-dog in* FAINLOVE'S *arms.*

Jen. You always look well.

Mrs Cler. For I'm always talking, you mean so; that disquiets thy sullen English temper, but I don't really look so well when I am silent—— If I do but offer to speak—Then I may say that—Oh, bless me, Jenny, I am so pale, I am afraid of myself——I have not laid on half red enough—— What a dough-baked thing I was before I improved myself, and travelled for beauty——However, my face is very prettily design'd to-day.

Fain. Indeed, madam, you begin to have so fine an hand, that you are younger every day than other.

Mrs Cler. The ladies abroad used to call me Mademoiselle Titian, I was so famous for my colouring; but, pr'ythee, wench, bring me my black eye-brows out of the next room.

Jen. Madam, I have 'em in my hand.

Fain. It would be happy for all that are to see you to-day, if you could change your eyes too.

Mrs Cler. Gallant enough—No, hang it, I'll wear these I have on; this mode of visage takes mightily; I had three ladies last week came over to my complexion—I think to be a fair woman this fortnight, 'till I find I'm aped too much—I believe there are an hundred copies of me already.

Jen. Dear madam, won't your ladyship please to let me be of the next countenance you leave off?

Mrs Cler. You may, Jenny—but I assure you it is a very pretty piece of ill-nature, for a woman that has any genius for beauty, to observe the servile imitation of her manner, her motion, her glances, and her smiles.

Fain. Ay, indeed, madam, nothing can be so ridiculous as to imitate the inimitable.

Mrs Cler. Indeed, as you say, Fainlove, the French mien is no more to be learn'd than the language, without going thither—Then, again, to see some poor ladies who have clownish, penurious English husbands, turn and torture their old clothes into so many forms, and dye 'em into so many colours, to follow me—What say'st, Jenny? What say'st? Not a word?

Jen. Why, madam, all that I can say——

Mrs Cler. Nay, I believe, Jenny, thou hast nothing to say, any more than the rest of thy countrywomen—The splenetics speak just as the weather lets 'em—They are mere talking barometers—Abroad, the people of quality go on so eternally, and still go on, and are gay and entertain—In England discourse is made up of nothing but question and answer.—I was t'other day at a visit, where there was a profound silence for, I believe, the third part of a minute.

Jen. And your ladyship there?

Mrs Cler. They infected me with their dulness. Who can keep up their good humour at an English visit?—They sit as at a funeral, silent in the midst of many candles—One, perhaps, alarms the room—'Tis very cold weather—then all the mutes play their fans—till some other question happens, and then the fans go off again.——

Enter Boy.

Boy. Madam, your spinet-master is come.

Mrs Cler. Bring him in, he's very pretty company.

Fain. His spinet is, he never speaks himself.

Mrs Cler. Speak, simpleton! What then, he keeps out silence, does not he? [*Enter.*]—Oh, sir, you must forgive me, I have been very idle—Well, you pardon me? [*Master bows.*]——Did you think I was perfect in the song?—[*Bows.*] But, pray let me hear it once more. Let us see it. [*Reads.*

SONG.

With studied airs and practised smiles,
Flavia my ravish'd heart beguiles:
The charms we make, are ours alone,
Nature's works are not our own.

Her skilful hand gives ev'ry grace,
And shows her fancy in her face;
She feeds with art an amorous rage,
Nor fears the force of coming age.

You sing it very well: But, I confess, I wish you'd give more into the French manner.—Observe me hum it *à la Françoise.*

With studied airs, &c.

The whole person, every limb, every nerve sings ——the English way is only being for that time a mere musical instrument, just sending forth a sound, without knowing they do so——Now I'll give you a little of it like an English woman—— You are to suppose I've denied you twenty times, look'd silly, and all that—Then with hands and face insensible——I have a mighty cold.

With studied airs, &c.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Madam, Captain Clerimont, and a very strange gentleman, are come to wait on you.

Mrs Cler. Let him and the very strange gentleman come in.

Fain. Oh! madam, that's the country gentleman I was telling you of.

Enter HUMPHRY *and Captain* CLERIMONT.

Fain. Madam, may I do myself the honour to recommend Mr Gubbin, son and heir to Sir Harry Gubbin, to your ladyship's notice?

Mrs Cler. Mr Gubbin, I am extremely pleased with your suit, 'tis antique, and originally from France.

Humph. It is always lock'd up, madam, when I'm in the country. My father prizes it mightily.

Mrs Cler. 'Twould make a very pretty dan-

cing-suit in a mask. Oh! Captain Clerimont, I have a quarrel with you.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Madam, your ladyship's husband desires to know whether you see company to-day, or not?

Mrs Cler. Who, you clown?

Serv. Mr Clerimont, madam.

Mrs Cler. He may come in.

Enter CLERIMONT, *Sen.*

Mrs Cler. Your very humble servant.

Cler. Sen. I was going to take the air this morning, in my coach, and did myself the honour, before I went, to receive your commands, finding you saw company.

Mrs Cler. At any time, when you know I do, you may let me see you. Pray how did you sleep last night?——If I had not asked him that question, they might have thought we lay together. [*Aside.*] [*Here* FAINLOVE, *looking through a perspective, bows to* CLERIMONT, *Senior.*] But, captain, I have a quarrel with you—I have utterly forgot those three coupees, you promised to come again, and shew me. Your humble servant, sir.——But, oh! [*As she is going to be led by the captain.*] Have you sign'd that mortgage, to pay off my lady Faddle's winning at ombre?

Cler. Sen. Yes, madam.

Mrs Cler. Then all's well, my honour's safe. [*Exit* CLERIMONT, *Sen.*] Come, captain, lead me this step—for I am apt to make a false one—you shall shew me.

Capt. I'll shew you, madam, 'tis no matter for a fiddle; I'll give you them the French way, in a teaching tune. Pray, more quick——*O mademoiselle que faitez vous—A moi*—There again—Now slide, as it were, with and without measure ——There you out-did the gipsey——and you have all the smiles of the dance to a tittle.

Mrs Cler. Why, truly, I think that the greatest part—I have seen an English-woman dance a jig with the severity of a vestal virgin——

Humph. If this be French dancing and singing, I fancy I could do it—Haw! haw!

[*Capers aside.*

Mrs Cler. I protest, Mr Gubbin, you have almost the step, without any of our country bashfulness.—Give me your hand——Haw, haw! So, so, a little quicker—that's right, haw! Captain, your brother delivered this spark to me, to be diverted here, till he calls for him.

[*Exit Capt.* CLERIMONT.

Humph. This cutting so high makes one's money jingle confoundedly. I'm resolved I'll never carry above one pocket full hereafter.

Mrs Cler. You do it very readily—You amaze me.

Humph. Are the gentlemen of France generally so well bred as we are in England?—Are they, madam, ha! But, young gentleman, when shall I see this sister? Haw, haw, haw! Is not the higher one jumps the better?

Fain. She'll be mightily taken with you, I'm sure. One would not think 'twas in you—you're so gay—and dance so very high——

Humph. What should ail me? Did you think I was wind-gall'd? I can sing too, if I please—but I won't till I see your sister. This is a mighty pretty house.

Mrs Cler. Well, do you know that I like this gentleman extremely; I should be glad to inform him——But, were you never in France, Mr Gubbin?

Humph. No;—but I'm always thus pleasant, if my father's not by——I protest, I'd advise your sister to have me—I'm for marrying her at once—why should I stand shilly-shally, like a country bumpkin?

Fain. Mr Gubbin, I dare say she'll be as forward as you; we'll go in and see her. [*Apart.*

Mrs Cler. Then he has not yet seen the lady he is in love with? I protest very new and gallant—Mr Gubbin, she must needs believe you a frank person——Fainlove, I must see this sister too, I'm resolved she shall like him.

There needs not time true passion to discover:
The most believing is the most a lover.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Park.*

Enter Niece, sola.

Niece. Oh, Clerimont! Clerimont! To be struck at first sight! I'm asham'd of my weakness; I find in myself all the symptoms of a raging amour; I love solitude; I grow pale; I sigh frequently; I call upon the name of Clerimont, when I don't think of it——his person is ever in my eyes, and his voice in my ears——methinks I long to lose myself in some pensive grove, or to hang over the head of some warbling fountain, with a lute in my hand, softening the murmurs of the water.

Enter Aunt.

Aunt. Biddy, Biddy! where's Biddy Tipkin

Niece. Whom do you inquire for?

Aunt. Come, come, he's just a-coming at the Park door.

Niece. Who is coming?

Aunt. Your cousin Humphry—who should be coming? Your lover, your husband that is to be ——Pray, my dear, look well, and be civil, for your credit and mine too.

Niece. If he answers my idea, I shall rally the rustic to death.

Aunt. Hist——here he is.

Enter HUMPHRY.

Humph. Aunt, your humble servant——Is that—ha! aunt?

Aunt. Yes, cousin Humphry, that's your cousin Bridget. Well, I'll leave you together.

[*Exit Aunt. They sit.*

Humph. Aunt does as she'd be done by, cousin Bridget, does not she, cousin? ha! What, are you a Londoner, and not speak to a gentleman?

Look ye, cousin, the old folks resolving to marry us, I thought it would be proper to see how I liked you, as not caring to buy a pig in a poke ——for I love to look before I leap.

Niece. Sir, your person and address bring to my mind the whole history of Valentine and Orson: what! would they marry me to a wild man? Pray answer me a question or two.

Humph. Ay, ay, as many as you please, cousin Bridget.

Niece. What wood were you taken in? How long have you been caught?

Humph. Caught!

Niece. Where were your haunts?

Humph. My haunts!

Niece. Are not clothes very uneasy to you? Is this strange dress the first you ever wore?

Humph. How!

Niece. Are you not a great admirer of roots, and raw flesh?—Let me look upon your nails ——Don't you love blackberries, haws, and pignuts, mightily?

Humph. How!

Niece. Canst thou deny that thou wert suckled by a wolf? You ha'n't been so barbarous, I hope, since you came amongst men, as to hunt your nurse—Have you?

Humph. Hunt my nurse? Ay, 'tis so, she's distracted as sure as a gun——Hark ye, cousin, pray will you let me ask you a question or two?

Niece. If thou hast yet learnt the use of language, speak, monster.

Humph. How long have you been thus?

Niece. Thus! what wouldst thou say?

Humph. What's the cause of it? Tell me truly now—Did you ever love any body before me?

Niece. Go, go, thou'rt a savage. [*Rises.*

Humph. They never let you go abroad, I suppose.

Niece. Thou'rt a monster, I tell thee.

Humph. Indeed, cousin, though it is folly to tell thee so—I am afraid thou art a mad woman.

Niece. I'll have thee into some forest.

Humph. I'll take thee into a dark room.

Niece. I hate thee.

Humph. I wish you did—There's no hate lost, I assure thee, cousin Bridget.

Niece. Cousin Bridget, quoth-a!—I'd as soon claim kindred with a mountain bear—I detest thee.

Humph. You never do any harm in these fits, I hope—But do you hate me in earnest?

Niece. Dost thou ask it, ungentle forester?

Humph. Yes, for I've a reason, look ye. It happens very well if you hate me, and in your senses, for to tell you truly—I don't much care for you; and there is another fine woman, as I am inform'd, that is in some hopes of having me.

Niece. This merits my attention. [*Aside.*

Humph. Look ye d'ye see—as I said, I don't care for you——I would not have you set your heart on me—but if you like any body else let me know it—and I'll find out a way for us to get rid of one another, and deceive the old folks tha would couple us.

Niece. This wears the face of an amour—There is something in that thought which makes thy presence less insupportable.

Humph. Nay, nay, now you're growing fond; if you come with these maids tricks, to say you hate at first, and afterwards like me, you'll spoil the whole design.

Niece. Don't fear it——When I think of consorting with thee, may the wild boar defile the cleanly ermine, may the tiger be wedded to the kid!

Humph. When I of thee, may the pole-cat caterwaul with the civet!

Niece. When I harbour the least thought of thee, may the silver Thames forget its course!

Humph. When I like thee, may I be soused over head and ears in a horse-pond!——But do you hate me?

Enter Aunt.

Niece. For ever; and you me?

Humph. Most heartily.

Aunt. Ha! I like this——They are come to promises—and protestations. [*Aside.*

Humph. I am very glad I have found a way to please you.

Niece. You promise to be constant.

Humph. Till death.

Niece. Thou best of savages!

Humph. Thou best of savages! poor Biddy.

Aunt. Oh the pretty couple! joking on one another. Well, how do you like your cousin Humphry now?

Niece. Much better than I thought I should—He's quite another thing than what I took him for—We have both the same passions for one another.

Humph. We wanted only an occasion to open our hearts, aunt.

Aunt. Oh, how this will rejoice my brother, and Sir Harry! we'll go to 'em.

Humph. No, I must fetch a walk with a new acquaintance, Mr Samuel Pounce.

Aunt. An excellent acquaintance for your husband! come, niece, come.

Niece. Farewell, rustic.

Humph. B'ye, Biddy.

Aunt. Rustic! Biddy! Ha! ha! pretty creatures. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I—*Continues.*

Enter Captain CLERIMONT *and* POUNCE.

Capt. Does she expect me, then, at this very instant?

Pounce. I tell you, she ordered me to bring the painter at this very hour precisely, to draw her niece——for, to make her picture peculiarly charming, she has now that down-cast pretty shame, that warm cheek, glowing with the fear and hope of to-day's fate, with the inviting, coy affectation of a bride, all in her face at once. Now I know you are a pretender that way.

Capt. Enough, I warrant, to personate the character on such an inspiring occasion.

Pounce. You must have the song I spoke of perform'd at this window—at the end of which I'll give you a signal——Every thing is ready for you, your pencil, your canvas stretch'd—your——Be sure you play your part in humour: to be a painter for a lady, you're to have the excessive flattery of a lover, the ready invention of a poet, and the easy gesture of a player.

Capt. Come, come, no more instructions; my imagination out-runs all you can say: be gone, be gone! [*Exit* POUNCE.

A SONG.

Why, lovely charmer, tell me why,
So very kind, and yet so shy?
Why does the cold forbidding air
Give damps of sorrow and despair?
Or why that smile my soul subdue,
And kindle up my flames anew?

In vain you strive with all your art,
By turns to freeze and fire my heart:
When I behold a face so fair,
So sweet a look, so soft an air,
My ravish'd soul is charm'd all o'er,
I cannot love thee less nor more.

[*After the song,* POUNCE *appears beckoning the Captain.*

Pounce. Captain, captain. [*Exit Captain.*

SCENE II.—*Niece's Lodgings.*

Enter Aunt and Niece.

Aunt. Indeed, niece, I am as much overjoy'd to see your wedding day, as if it were my own.

Niece. But why must it be huddled up so?

Aunt. Oh, my dear, a private wedding is much better; your mother had such a bustle at hers, with feasting and fooling: besides, they did not go to bed till two in the morning.

Niece. Since you understand things so well, I wonder you never married yourself.

Aunt. My dear, I was very cruel thirty years ago, and nobody ask'd me since.

Niece. Alas-a-day!

Aunt. Yet, I assure you, there were a great many matches proposed to me—There was Sir Gilbert Jolly; but he, forsooth, could not please; he drank ale, and smok'd tobacco, and was no fine gentleman, forsooth—but then, again, there was young Mr Peregrine Shapely, who had travell'd, and spoke French, and smiled at all I said; he was a fine gentleman—but then he was consumptive: and yet again, to see how one may be mistaken: Sir Jolly died in half a year, and my lady Shapely has by that thin slip eight children, that should have been mine; but here's the bridegroom. So, cousin Humphry!

Enter HUMPHRY.

Humph. Your servant, ladies—So, my dear—

Niece. So, my savage———

Aunt. O fie, no more of that to your husband, Biddy.

Humph. No matter, I like it as well as duck or love: I know my cousin loves me as well as I do her.

Aunt. I'll leave you together; I must go and get ready an entertainment for you when you come home. [*Exit.*

Humph. Well, cousin, are you constant?——Do you hate me still?

Niece. As much as ever.

Humph. What a happiness it is, when people's inclinations jump! I wish I knew what to do with you: can you get nobody, d'ye think, to marry you?

Niece. Oh, Clerimont, Clerimont! where art thou? [*Aside.*

Enter Aunt and Captain CLERIMONT *disguised.*

Aunt. This, sir, is the lady whom you are to draw——You see, sir, as good flesh and blood as a man would desire to put in colours—I must have her maiden picture.

Humph. Then the painter must make haste—Ha, cousin!

Niece. Hold thy tongue, good savage.

Capt. Madam, I'm generally forced to new-mould every feature, and mend nature's handy-work; but here she has made so finished an original, that I despair of my copy's coming up to it.

Aunt. Do you hear that, niece?

Niece. I don't desire you to make graces where you find none.

Capt. To see the difference of the fair sex—I protest to you, madam, my fancy is utterly ex-

hausted with inventing faces for those that sit to me. The first entertainment I generally meet with, are complaints for want of sleep; they never look'd so pale in their lives, as when they sit for their pictures——Then, so many touches and re-touches, when the face is finished——That wrinkle ought not to have been, those eyes are too languid, the colour's two weak, that side-look hides the mole on the left cheek. In short, the whole likeness is struck out: but in you, madam, the highest I can come up to will be but rigid justice.

Humph. A comical dog, this!

Aunt. Truly the gentleman seems to understand his business.

Niece. Sir, if your pencil flatters like your tongue, you are going to draw a picture that won't be at all like me. Sure, I have heard that voice somewhere. [*Aside.*

Capt. Madam, be pleased to place yourself near me; nearer still, madam, here falls the best light.—You must know, madam, there are three kinds of airs which the ladies most delight in—There is your haughty—your mild—and your pensive air—The haughty may be express'd with the head a little more erect than ordinary, and the countenance with a certain disdain in it, so as she may appear almost, but not quite, inexorable: this kind of air is generally heightened with a little knitting of the brows—I gave my lady Scornwell her choice of a dozen frowns, before she could find one to her liking.

Niece. But what's the mild air?

Capt. The mild air is composed of a languish, and a smile——But if I might advise, I'd rather be a pensive beauty; the pensive usually feels her pulse, leans on one arm, or sits ruminating with a book in her hand——which conversation she is supposed to choose, rather than the endless importunities of lovers.

Humph. A comical dog.

Aunt. Upon my word he understands his business well; I'll tell you, niece, how your mother was drawn——She had an orange in her hand, and a nosegay in her bosom, but a look so pure and fresh colour'd, you'd have taken her for one of the Seasons.

Capt. You seem, indeed, madam, most inclined to the pensive——The pensive delights also in the fall of waters, pastoral figures, or any rural view suitable to a fair lady, who, with a delicate spleen, has retired from the world, as sick of its flattery and admiration.

Niece. No——since there is room for fancy in a picture, I would be drawn like the amazon Thalestris, with a spear in my hand, and an helmet on a table before me——At a distance behind, let there be a dwarf, holding by the bridle a milk-white palfrey——

Capt. Madam, the thought is full of spirit; and, if you please, there shall be a Cupid stealing away your helmet, to show that love should have a part in all gallant actions.

Niece. That circumstance may be very picturesque.

Capt. Here, madam, shall be your own picture, here the palfrey, and here the dwarf—The dwarf must be very little, or we sha'n't have room for him.

Niece. A dwarf cannot be too little.

Capt. I'll make him a blackamoor, to distinguish him from the other too powerful dwarf——[*Sighs*] the Cupid—I'll place that beauteous boy near you; 'twill look very natural—He'll certainly take you for his mother Venus.

Niece. I leave these particulars to your own fancy.

Capt. Please, madam, to uncover your neck a little; a little lower still—a little, little lower.

Niece. I'll be drawn thus, if you please, sir.

Capt. Ladies, have you heard the news of a late marriage between a young lady of a great fortune and a younger brother of a good family?

Aunt. Pray, sir, how is it?

Capt. This young gentleman, ladies, is a particular acquaintance of mine, and much about my age and stature; (look me full in the face, madam;) he accidentally met the young lady, who had in her all the perfections of her sex; (hold up your head, madam; that's right:) she let him know that his person and discourse were not altogether disagreeable to her—the difficulty was, how to gain a second interview; (your eyes full upon mine, madam;) for never was there such a sigher in all the valleys of Arcadia, as that unfortunate youth, during the absence of her he loved.

Aunt. A-lack-a-day—poor young gentleman!

Niece. It must be he——what a charming amour is this! [*Aside.*

Capt. At length, ladies, he bethought himself of an expedient; he dress'd himself just as I am now, and came to draw her picture; (your eyes full upon mine, pray, madam.)

Humph. A subtle dog, I warrant him.

Capt. And by that means found an opportunity of carrying her off, and marrying her.

Aunt. Indeed, your friend was a very vicious young man.

Niece. Yet, perhaps, the young lady was not displeased at what he had done.

Capt. But, madam, what were the transports of the lover, when she made him that confession!

Niece. I dare say she thought herself very happy, when she got out of her guardian's hands.

Aunt. 'Tis very true, niece—There are abundance of those head-strong young baggages about town.

Capt. The gentleman has often told me, he was strangely struck at first sight; but when she sat to him for her picture, and assumed all those graces that are proper for the occasion, his torment was so exquisite, his occasions so violent, that he could not have lived a day, had he not found means to make the charmer of his heart his own.

Humph. 'Tis certainly the foolishest thing in the world to stand shilly-shally about a woman, when one has a mind to marry her.

Capt. The young painter turn'd poet on the subject; I believe I have the words by heart.

Niece. A sonnet! pray repeat it.

Capt. When gentle Parthenissa walks,
And sweetly smiles, and gaily talks,
A thousand shafts around her fly,
A thousand swains unheeded die:

If then she labours to be seen,
With all her killing air and mien;
From so much beauty, so much art,
What mortal can secure his heart?

Humph. I fancy if 'twas sung, 'twould make a very pretty catch.

Capt. My servant has a voice, you shall hear it. [*Here it is sung.*

Aunt. Why, this is pretty. I think a painter should never be without a good singer—It brightens the features strangely—I profess I'm mightily pleased; I'll but just step in, and give some orders, and be with you presently. [*Exit.*

Niece. Was not this adventurous painter called Clerimont?

Capt. It was Clerimont, the servant of Parthenissa; but let me beseech that beauteous maid to resolve, and make the incident I feign'd to her a real one——consider, madam, you are environ'd by cruel and treacherous guards, which would force you to a disagreeable marriage; your case is exactly the same with the princess of the Leontines in Clelia.

Niece. How can we commit such a solecism against all rules! what, in the first leaf of our history to have the marriage? You know it cannot be.

Capt. The pleasantest part of the history will be after marriage.

Niece. No! I never yet read of a knight that entered tilt or tournament after wedlock——'Tis not to be expected——When the husband begins, the hero ends; all that noble impulse to glory, all the generous passion for adventures is consumed in the nuptial torch; I don't know how it is, but Mars and Hymen never hit it.

Humph. [*Listening.*] Consumed in the nuptial torch. Mars and Hymen! What can all this mean?—I am very glad I can hardly read—They could never get these foolish fancies into my head—I had always a strong brain. [*Aside.*] Hark ye, cousin, is not this painter a comical dog?

Niece. I think he's very agreeable company—

Humph. Why, then, I tell you what—marry him. A painter's a very genteel calling—He's an ingenious fellow, and certainly poor, I fancy he'd be glad on't; I'll keep my aunt out of the room a minute or two, that's all the time you have to consider. [*Exit.*

Capt. Fortune points out to us this only occasion of our happiness: love's of celestial origin, and needs no long acquaintance to be manifest. Lovers, like angels, speak by intuition——Their souls are in their eyes.

Niece. Then I fear he sees mine. [*Aside.*] But I cann't think of abridging our amours, and cutting off all farther decorations of disguise, serenade, and adventure.

Capt. Nor would I willingly lose the merit of long services, midnight sighs, and plaintive solitudes—were there not a necessity.

Niece. Then to be seized by stealth!

Capt. Why, madam, you are a great fortune, and should not be married the common way. Indeed, madam, you ought to be stolen; nay, in strictness, I don't know but you ought to be ravish'd.

Niece. But then our history will be short.

Capt. I grant it; but you don't consider there's a device in another's leading you instead of this person that's to have you; and, madam, though our amours cannot furnish out a romance, they'll make a very pretty novel——Why smiles my fair?

Niece. I am almost of opinion, that had Oroondates been as pressing as Clerimont, Cassandra had been but a pocket-book: but it looks so ordinary, to go out at a door to be married—Indeed, I ought to be taken out of a window, and run away with.

Enter HUMPHRY *and* POUNCE.

Humph. Well, cousin, the coach is at the door. If you please I'll lead you.

Niece. I put myself into your hands, good savage; but you promise to leave me.

Humph. I tell you plainly, you must not think of having me.

Pounce. [*To Capt.*] You'll have opportunity enough to carry her off; the old fellow will be busy with me—I'll gain all the time I can, but be bold and prosper.

Niece. Clerimont, you follow us.

Capt. Upon the wings of love. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Chamber.*

Enter CLERIMONT, *Senior, and* FAINLOVE.

Cler. Sen. Then she gave you this letter, and bid you read it as a paper of verses?

Fain. This is the place, the hour, the lucky minute—Now am I rubbing up my memory, to recollect all you said to me when you first ruin'd me, that I may attack her right.

Cler. Sen. Your eloquence would be needless—'tis so unmodish to need persuasion: modesty makes a lady embarrass'd—But my spouse is above that; as, for example, [*Reading the letter*] *Fainlove, you don't seem to want wit—therefore I need say no more, than that distance to a woman of*

the world is becoming in no man but a husband. An hour hence, come up the back stairs to my closet. Adieu, mon mignon.
I am glad you are punctual. I'll conceal myself to observe your interview—Oh, torture! but this wench must not see it. [*Aside.*

Fain. Be sure you come time enough to save my reputation.

Cler. Sen. Remember your orders, distance becomes no man but an husband.

Fain. I am glad you are in so good humour on the occasion; but you know me to be but a bully in love, that can bluster only till the minute of engagement—But I'll top my part, and form my conduct by my own sentiments—If she grows coy, I'll grow more saucy—'Twas so I was won myself—

Cler. Sen. Well, my dear rival—your assignation draws nigh—you are to put on your transport, your impatient throbbing heart won't let you wait her arrival—let the dull family thing and husband, who reckons his moments by his cares, be content to wait; but you are gallant, and measure time by ecstasies.

Fain. I hear her coming—to your post, good husband; know your duty, and don't be in the way when your wife has a mind to be in private—to your post, into the coal-hole.

Enter Mrs CLERIMONT.

Welcome, my dear, my tender charmer——Oh! to my longing arms——feel the heart pat, that falls and rises as you smile or frown——Oh, the ecstatic moment!—I think that is something like what has been said to me. [*Aside.*

Mrs Cler. Very well, Fainlove—I protest I value myself for my discerning—I knew you had fire through all the respect you shewed me—But how came you to make no direct advances, young gentleman?—why was I forced to admonish your gallantry?

Fain. Why, madam, I knew you a woman of breeding, and above the senseless niceties of an English wife. The French way is, you are to go so far, whether they are agreeable or not: If you are so happy as to please, nobody that is not of a constrain'd behaviour, is at a loss to let you know it. Besides, if the humbles ervant makes the first approaches, he has the impudence of making a request, but not the honour of obeying a command.

Mrs Cler. Right—a woman's man should conceal passion in a familiar air of indifference. Now, there's Mr Clerimont; I cann't allow him the least freedom, but the unfashionable fool grows so fond of me, he cannot hide it in public.

Fain. Ay, madam; I have often wondered at your ladyship's choice of one who seems to have so little of the *beau monde* in his carriage, but just what you force him to——while there were so many pretty gentlemen—— [*Dancing.*

Mrs Cler. O, young gentleman, you are mightily mistaken, if you think such animals as you, and pretty Beau Titmouse, and pert Billy Butterfly, though I suffer you to come in, and play about my rooms, are any ways in competition with a man whose name one would wear.

Fain. Oh, madam! then I find we are——

Mrs Cler. A woman of sense must have respect for a man of that character; but, alas! respect ——is respect! Respect is not the thing——respect has something too solemn for soft moments—You things are more proper for hours of dalliance.

Cler. Sen. [*Peeping.*] How have I wronged this fine lady!——I find I am to be a cuckold out of her pure esteem for me.

Mrs Cler. Besides, those fellows for whom we have respect, have none for us; I warrant on such an occasion Clerimont would have ruffled a woman out of all form, while you——.

Cler. Sen. A good hint———now, my cause comes on. [*Aside.*

Fain. Since, then, you allow us fitter for soft moments, why do we misemploy 'em? Let me kiss that beauteous hand, and clasp that graceful frame.

Mrs Cler. How, Fainlove! What, you don't design to be impertinent—but my lips have a certain roughness on 'em to-day, ha'n't they?

Fain. [*Kissing.*] No——they are all softness—their delicious sweetness is inexpressible——here language fails——let me applaud thy lips, not by the utterance, but by the touch of mine.

Enter CLERIMONT, *Senior, drawing his sword.*

Cler. Sen. Ha, villain! ravisher! invader of my bed and honour! draw.

Mrs Cler. What means this insolence, this intrusion into my privacy? What, do you come into my very closet without knocking? Who put this into your head?

Cler. Sen. My injuries have alarm'd me, and I'll bear no longer, but sacrifice your bravado, the author of 'em.

Mrs Cler. O poor Mr Fainlove——Must he die for his complaisance, and innocent freedoms with me? How could you, if you might? Oh! the sweet youth! What, fight Mr Fainlove? What will the ladies say?

Fain. Let me come at the intruder on ladies private hours——the unfashionable monster——I'll prevent all future interruption from him ———let me come—— [*Drawing his sword.*

Mrs Cler. O the brave pretty creature? Look at his youth and innocence——He is not made for such rough encounters—Stand behind me—— Poor Fainlove!—There is not a visit in town, sir, where you shall not be displayed at full length for this intrusion——I banish you for ever from my sight and bed.

Cler. Sen. I obey you, madam; for distance is becoming in no man but an husband——[*Giving her the letter, which she reads, and falls into a swoon.*]—I've gone too far—[*Kissing her.*] The impertinent was guilty of nothing but what my indiscretion led her to——This is the first kiss I've had these six weeks——but she awakes.—— Well, Jenny, you topp'd your part, indeed—— Come to my arms, thou ready, willing fair one!

——Thou hast no vanities, no niceties; but art thankful for every instance of love that I bestow on thee—— [*Embracing her.*

Mrs Cler. What! am I then abused? Is it a wench then of his? Oh, me! was ever poor abused wife, poor innocent lady, thus injured!

[*Runs and seizes* FAINLOVE'S *sword.*

Cler. Sen. Oh, the brave pretty creature!—— Hurt Mr Fainlove! Look at his youth, his innocence——Ha, ha! [*Interposing.*

Fain. Have a care, have a care, dear sir——I know myself she'll have no mercy.

Mrs Cler. I'll be the death of her——let me come on——Stand from between us, Mr Clerimont——I would not hurt you.

[*Pushing and crying.*

Cler. Sen. Run, run, Jenny. [*Exit* JENNY.

[*Looks at her upbraidingly before he speaks.* Well, madam, are these the innocent freedoms you claim'd of me? Have I deserv'd this? How has there been a moment of yours ever interrupted with the real pangs I suffer? The daily importunities of creditors, who become so by serving your profuse vanities: did I ever murmur at supplying any of your diversions, while I believed 'em (as you call'd 'em) harmless? must, then, those eyes, that used to glad my heart with their familiar brightness, hang down with guilt? Guilt has transform'd thy whole person; nay, the very memory of it——Fly from my growing passion.

Mrs Cler. I cannot fly, nor bear it——Oh! look not——

Cler. Sen. What can you say? Speak quickly.

[*Offering to draw.*

Mrs Cler. I never saw you moved before—— Don't murder me, impenitent; I'm wholly in your power as a criminal, but, remember, I have been so in a tender regard.

Cler. Sen. But how have you consider'd that regard?

Mrs Cler. Is't possible you can forgive what you ensnar'd me into?——Oh! look at me kindly—You know I have only err'd in my intention, nor saw my danger, till, by this honest art, you had shown me what 'tis to venture to the utmost limit of what is lawful. You laid that train, I'm sure, to alarm, not to betray, my innocence—— Mr Clerimont scorns such baseness! therefore I kneel——I weep——I am convinced. [*Kneels.*

[CLER. *Sen. takes her up, embracing her.*

Cler. Sen. Then kneel, and weep no more—— my fairest—my reconciled!——Be so in a moment, for know, I cannot (without wringing my own heart) give you the least compunction—— Be in humour—It shall be your own fault, if ever there's a serious word more on this subject.

Mrs Cler. I must correct every idea that rises in my mind, and learn every gesture of my body a-new——I detest the thing I was.

Cler. Sen. No, no—You must not do so—Our joy and grief, honour and reproach, are the same; you must slide out of your foppery by degrees, so that it may appear your own act.

Mrs Cler. But this wench!——

Cler. Sen. She is already out of your way—— You shall see the castastrophe of her fate yourself——But still keep up the fine lady till we go out of town——You may return to it with as decent airs as you please——And, now I have shown you your error, I'm in so good humour as to repeat you a couplet on the occasion——

They only who gain minds, true laurels wear,
'Tis less to conquer, than convince the fair.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Room.*

Enter POUNCE, *with Papers.*

[*A table, chairs, pen, ink, and paper.*]

Pounce. 'Tis a delight to gull these old rascals, and set 'em at variance about stakes, which I know neither of 'em will ever have possession of.

Enter TIPKIN, *and Sir* HARRY.

Tip. Do you design, Sir Harry, that they shall have an estate in their own hands, and keep house themselves, poor things?

Sir Har. No, no, sir, I know better; they shall go down into the country, and live with me, nor touch a farthing of money; but, having all things necessary provided, they shall go tame about the house, and breed.

Tip. Well, Sir Harry, then considering that all human things are subject to change, it behoves every man that has a just sense of mortality, to take care of his money.

Sir Har. I don't know what you mean, brother—What do you drive at, brother?

Tip. This instrument is executed by you, your son, and my niece, which discharges me of all retrospects.

Sir Har. It is confess'd, brother; but what then?—

Tip. All that remains is, that you pay me for the young lady's twelve years board, as also all other charges, as wearing apparel, &c.

Sir Har. What is this you say? Did I give you my discharge from all retrospects, as you call it, and after all do you come with this and t'other, and all that? I find you are, I tell you, sir, to your face, I find you are——

Tip. I find too what you are, Sir Harry.

Sir Har. What am I, sir? What am I?

Tip. Why, sir, you are angry.

Sir Har. Sir, I scorn your words, I am not angry—Mr Pounce is my witness, I am gentle as a lamb—Would it not make any flesh alive angry, to see a close hunks come after all with a demand of——

Tip. Mr Pounce, pray inform Sir Harry in this point.

Pounce. Indeed, Sir Harry, I must tell you plainly, that Mr Tipkin, in this, demands nothing but what he may recover—For though this case may be considered *multifariam;* that is to say, as 'tis usually, commonly, *vicatim,* or vulgarly express'd——Yet, I say, when we only observe, that

the power is settled as the law requires, *assensu patris*, by the consent of the father—That circumstance imports you are well acquainted with the advantages which accrue to your family by this alliance, which corroborates Mr Tipkin's demand, and avoids all objections that can be made.

Sir Har. Why then I find you are his adviser in all this—

Pounce. Look ye, Sir Harry, to show you I love to promote among my clients a good understanding; though Mr Tipkin may claim four thousand pounds, I'll engage for him, and I know him so well, that he shall take three thousand nine hundred and ninety-eight pounds, four shillings, and eight-pence farthing.

Tip. Indeed, Mr Pounce, you are too hard upon me.

Pounce. You must consider a little, Sir Harry is your brother.

Sir Har. Three thousand nine hundred and ninety-eight pounds, four shillings, and eight-pence farthing! for what, I say? for what, sir?

Pounce. For what, sir! for what she wanted, sir, a fine lady is always in want, sir—Her very clothes would come to that money in half the time.

Sir Har. Three thousand nine hundred and ninety-eight pounds, four shillings and eight-pence farthing, for clothes! pray how many suits does she wear out in a year?

Pounce. Oh, dear sir, a fine lady's clothes are not old by being worn, but by being seen.

Sir Har. Well, I'll save her clothes for the future, after I have got her into the country—I'll warrant her she shall not appear more in this wicked town, where clothes are worn out by sight——And as to what you demand, I tell you, sir, 'tis extortion.

Tip. Sir Harry, do you accuse me of extortion?

Sir Har. Yes, I say extortion.

Tip. Mr Pounce, write down that——There are very good laws provided against scandal and calumny—Loss of reputation may tend to loss of money——

Pounce. Item, For having accused Mr Tipkin of extortion.

Sir Har. Nay, if you come to your *items*—Look ye, Mr Tipkin, this is an inventory of such goods as were left to my niece Bridget, by her deceased father, and which I expect shall be forth-coming at her marriage to my son——

Imprimis, A golden locket of her mother's, with something very ingenious in Latin on the inside of it.

Item, A couple of muskets, with two shoulder belts, and bandeliers.

Item, A large silver caudle-cup, with a true story engraven on it.

Pounce. But, Sir Harry——

Sir Har. Item, A base viol, with almost all the strings to it, and only a small hole on the back.

Pounce. But nevertheless, sir——

Sir Har. This is the furniture of my brother's bed-chamber that follows—A suit of tapestry hangings, with the story of Judith and Holofernes, torn only where the head should have been off—an old bedstead curiously wrought about the posts, consisting of two load of timber—a hone, a bason, three razors, and a comb-case——Look ye, sir, you see I can *item* it.

Pounce. Alas! Sir Harry, if you had ten quire of *items,* 'tis all answer'd in the word retrospect.

Sir Har. Why then, Mr Pounce and Mr Tipkin, you are both rascals.

Tip. Do you call me rascal, Sir Harry?

Sir Har. Yes, sir.

Tip. Write it down, Mr Pounce——at the end of the leaf.

Sir Har. If you have room, Mr Pounce—put down villain, son of a whore, curmudgeon, hunks, and scoundrel.

Tip. Not so fast, Sir Harry, he cannot write so fast, you are at the word villain—Son of a whore, I take it, was next——You may make the account as large as you please, Sir Harry.

Sir Har. Come, come, I won't be used thus ——Hark ye, sirrah, draw—What do you do at this end of the town without a sword?—Draw, I say—

Tip. Sir Harry, you are a military man, a colonel of the militia.

Sir Har. I am so, sirrah, and will run such an extorting dog as you through the guts, to show the militia is useful.

Pounce. Oh dear, oh dear!—How am I concern'd to see persons of your figure thus moved —The wedding is coming in—We'll settle these things afterwards.

Tip. I am calm.

Sir Har. Tipkin, live these two hours—but expect—

Enter HUMPHRY *leading Niece, Mrs* CLERIMONT *led by* FAINLOVE, *Capt.* CLERIMONT, *and* CLERIMONT, *Sen.*

Pounce. Who are these? Hey-day, who are these, Sir Harry? Ha!

Sir Har. Some frolic, 'tis wedding-day—no matter.

Humph. Haw, haw; father—master uncle—Come, you must stir your stumps, you must dance —Come, old lads, kiss the ladies—

Mrs Cler. Mr Tipkin, Sir Harry, I beg pardon for an introduction so mal à-propos——I know sudden familiarity is not the English way—— Alas, Mr Gubbin, this father and uncle of yours must be new modell'd—How they stare, both of them!

Sir Har. Hark ye, Numps, who is this you have brought hither? is it not the famous fine lady, Mrs Clerimont—What a pox did you let her come near your wife—

Humph. Look ye, don't expose yourself, and play some mad country prank to disgrace me before her—I shall be laugh'd at, because she knows I understand better.

Mrs Cler. I congratulate, madam, your com-

ing out of the bondage of a virgin state—A woman cann't do what she will properly, 'till she's married.

Sir Har. Did you hear what she said to your wife?

Enter Aunt, before a service of dishes.

Aunt. So, Mr Bridegroom, pray take that napkin, and serve your spouse to-day, according to custom.

Humph. Mrs Clerimont, pray know my aunt.

Mrs Cler. Madam, I must beg your pardon; I cann't possibly like all that vast load of meat that you are sending in to table—besides, 'tis so offensively sweet, it wants that haut-goût we are so delighted with in France.

Aunt. You'll pardon it, since we did not expect you. Who is this? [*Aside.*

Mrs Cler. Oh, madam, I only speak for the future, little saucers are so much more polite——Look ye, I'm perfectly for the French way, whene'er I'm admitted, I take the whole upon me.

Sir Har. The French, madam!——I'd have you to know——

Mrs Cler. You'll not like it at first, out of a natural English sullenness, but that will come upon you by degrees——When I first went into France, I was mortally afraid of a frog, but in a little time I could eat nothing else, except sallads.

Aunt. Eat frogs! have I kiss'd one that has eat frogs—paw! paw!

Mrs Cler. Oh, madam—A frog and a sallad are delicious fare—'tis not long come up in France itself, but their glorious monarch has introduced the diet which makes 'em so spiritual——He eradicated all gross food by taxes, and for the glory of the monarch sent the subject a-grazing; but I fear I defer the entertainment and diversion of the day.

Humph. Now, father, uncle——before we go any further, I think 'tis necessary we know who and who's together—then I give either of you two hours to guess which is my wife———And 'tis not my cousin——so far I'll tell you.

Sir Har. How! What do you say? But oh! —you mean she is not your cousin now—she's nearer a-kin; that's well enough—Well said, Numps—Ha, ha, ha!

Humph. No, I don't mean so, I tell you I don't mean so—My wife hides her face under her hat.

[*All looking at* FAINLOVE.

Tip. What does the puppy mean? his wife under a hat!

Humph. Ay, ay, that's she, that's she——a good jest, 'faith.———

Sir Har. Hark ye, Numps.—what dost mean, child?—Is that a woman, and are you really married to her?

Humph. I am sure of both.

Sir Har. Are you so, sirrah? then, sirrah, this is your wedding-dinner, sirrah——Do you see, sirrah, here's roast meat.

[*Shakes his cane at* HUMPHRY.

Humph. Oh ho! what, beat a married man! hold him, Mr Clerimont, brother Pounce, Mr Wife; nobody stand by a young married man!

[*Runs behind* FAINLOVE.

Sir Har. Did not the dog say, brother Pounce? What, is this Mrs Ragoût—this Madam Clerimont? Who the devil are you all, but especially who the devil are you two?

[*Beats* HUMPHRY *and* FAINLOVE *off the stage, following.*

Tip. [*Aside.*] Master Pounce, all my niece's fortune will be demanded now—for I suppose that red-coat has her—Don't you think that you and I had better break.

Pounce. You may as soon as you please, but 'tis my interest to be honest a little longer.

Tip. Well, Biddy, since you would not accept of your cousin, I hope you ha'n't disposed of yourself elsewhere.

Niece. If you'll for a little while suspend your curiosity, you shall have the whole history of my amour, to this my nuptial day, under the title of the loves of Clerimont and Parthenissa.

Tip. Then, madam, your portion is in safe hands—

Capt. Come, come, old gentleman, 'tis in vain to contend; here's honest Mr Pounce shall be my engineer, and I warrant you, we beat you out of all your holds.

Aunt. What, then, is Mr Pounce a rogue? he must have some trick, brother; it cannot be; he must have cheated t'other side, for I'm sure he's honest. [*Apart to* TIPKIN.

Cler. Sen. Mr Pounce, all your sister has won of this lady she has honestly put into my hands, and I'll return it her, at this lady's particular request. [*To* POUNCE.

Pounce. And the thousand pounds you promised in your brother's behalf, I'm willing should be hers also.

Capt. Then go in, and bring 'em all back to make the best of an ill game; we'll eat the dinner and have a dance together, or we shall transgress all form.

Re-enter FAINLOVE, HUMPHRY, *and Sir* HARRY.

Sir Har. Well, since you say you are worth something, and the boy has set his heart upon you, I'll have patience till I see further.

Pounce. Come, come, Sir Harry, you shall find my alliance more considerable than you imagine; the Pounces are a family that will always have money, if there's any in the world—Come, fiddlers.

[*Dance here.*

Capt. You've seen th' extremes of the domestic life,
A son too much confined—too free a wife;
By generous bonds you either should restrain,
And only on their inclinations gain;
Wives to obey must love, children revere,
While only slaves are govern'd by their fear.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

BRITONS, who constant war, with factious rage,
For liberty against each other wage,
From foreign insult save this English stage.
No more th' Italians squalling tribe admit,
In tongues unknown; 'tis popery in wit.
The songs, (their selves confess,) from Rome they bring,
And 'tis high mass, for aught you know, they sing.
Husbands, take care! the danger may come nigher,
The women say their eunuch is a friar.

But is it not a serious ill to see
Europe's great arbiters so mean can be;
Passive, with an affected joy to sit,
Suspend their native taste of manly wit;
Neglect their comic humour, tragic rage,
For known defects of Nature, and of age?
Arise, from shame, ye conquering Britons, rise!
Such unadorn'd effeminacy despise;
Admire, (if you will doat on foreign wit,)
Not what Italians sing, but Romans writ.
So shall less work, such as to-night's slight play,
At your command with justice die away;
'Till then forgive your writers, that cann't bear
You should such very Tramontanes appear,
The nation, which contemns you, to revere.

Let Anna's soil be known for all its charms;
As fam'd for liberal sciences, as arms:
Let those derision meet, who would advance
Manners, or speech, from Italy or France.
Let them learn you, who would your favour find,
And English be the language of mankind.

THE

CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

BY

STEELE.

PROLOGUE.

To win your hearts and to secure your praise
The comic writers strive by various ways,
By subtile stratagems they act their game,
And leave untry'd no avenue to fame:
One writes the spouse a beating from his wife,
And says each stroke was copied from the life;
Some fix all wit and humour in grimace,
And make a livelihood of Pinkey's face;
Here one gay shew and costly habit tries,
Confiding to the judgment of your eyes;
Another smuts his scene, (a cunning shaver)
Sure of the rakes' and of the wenches' favour.
Oft have these arts prevail'd, and one may guess,
If practis'd o'er again, would find success;
But the bold sage, the poet of to-night,
By new and desp'rate rules resolv'd to write,
Fain would he give more just applauses rise,
And please by wit that scorns the aids of vice;
The praise he seeks from worthier motives springs,
Such praise, as praise to those that give it brings.

Your aid, most humbly sought, then Britons lend,
And lib'ral mirth like lib'ral men defend;
No more let ribaldry, with licence writ,
Usurp the name of eloquence or wit.
No more let lawless farce uncensur'd go,
The lewd dull gleanings of a Smithfield show;
'Tis yours with breeding to refine the age,
To chasten wit and moralize the stage.

Ye modest, wise, and good! ye fair! ye brave!
To-night the champion of your virtues save,
Redeem from long contempt the comic name,
And judge politely for your country's fame.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Sir JOHN BEVIL.
Mr SEALAND.
BEVIL, *Jun. in love with Indiana.*
MYRTLE, *in love with Lucinda.*
CIMBERTON, *a Coxcomb.*
HUMPHREY, *an old Servant to Sir John.*
TOM, *Servant to Bevil, Jun.*
DANIEL, *a country Boy, Servant to Indiana.*

WOMEN.

Mrs SEALAND, *second Wife to Sealand.*
ISABELLA, *Sister to Sealand.*
INDIANA, *Sealand's Daughter by his first Wife.*
LUCINDA, *Sealand's Daughter by his second Wife.*
PHILLIS, *Maid to Lucinda.*

SCENE,—*London.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Sir* JOHN BEVIL'S *House.*

Enter Sir JOHN BEVIL *and* HUMPHREY.

Sir J. B. Have you order'd that I should not be interrupted while I am dressing?

Humph. Yes, sir: I believ'd you had something of moment to say to me.

Sir J. B. Let me see, Humphrey; I think it is now full forty years, since I first took thee to be about myself.

Humph. I think, sir, it has been an easy forty years, and I have pass'd 'em without much sickness, care, or labour.

Sir J. B. Thou hast a brave constitution: you are a year or two older than I am, sirrah.

Humph. You have ever been of that mind, sir.

Sir J. B. You knave, you know it; I took thee for thy gravity and sobriety in my wild years.

Humph. Ah, sir! our manners were form'd from our different fortunes, not our different ages: wealth gave a loose to your youth, and poverty put a restraint upon mine.

Sir J. B. Well, Humphrey, you know I have been a kind master to you; I have us'd you, for the ingenuous nature I observed in you from the beginning, more like an humble friend than a servant.

Humph. I humbly beg you'll be so tender of me as to explain your commands, sir, without any farther preparation.

Sir J. B. I'll tell thee, then. In the first place, this wedding of my son's in all probability (shut the door) will never be at all.

Humph. How, sir, not be at all! for what reason is it carried on in appearance?

Sir J. B. Honest Humphrey, have patience, and I'll tell thee all in order. I have myself in some part of my life lived indeed with freedom, but I hope without reproach: now I thought liberty would be as little injurious to my son, therefore as soon as he grew towards man I indulg'd him in living after his own manner. I know not how otherwise to judge of his inclination; for what can be concluded from a behaviour under restraint and fear? But what charms me above all expression is, that my son has never in the least action, the most distant hint or word, valued himself upon that great estate of his mother's, which, according to our marriage-settlement, he has had ever since he came to age.

Humph. No, sir; on the contrary, he seems afraid of appearing to enjoy it before you or any belonging to you.—He is as dependent and resign'd to your will as if he had not a farthing but what must come from your immediate bounty.—You have ever acted like a good and generous father, and he like an obedient and grateful son.

Sir J. B. Nay, his carriage is so easy to all with whom he converses, that he is never assuming, never prefers himself to others, nor is ever guilty of that rough sincerity which a man is not called to, and certainly disobliges most of his acquaintance. To be short, Humphrey, his reputation was so fair in the world, that old Scaland, the great India merchant, has offer'd his only daughter, and sole heiress to that vast estate of his, as a wife for him. You may be sure I made no difficulties; the match was agreed on, and this very day named for the wedding.

Humph. What hinders the proceeding?

Sir J. B. Don't interrupt me. You know I was, last Thursday, at the masquerade; my son, you may remember, soon found us out——he knew his grand-father's habit, which I then wore; and though it was in the mode in the last age, yet the maskers, you know, follow'd us as if we had been the most monstrous figures in that whole assembly.

Humph. I remember, indeed, a young man of quality in the habit of a clown that was particularly troublesome.

Sir J. B. Right—he was too much what he seem'd to be. You remember how impertinently he follow'd and teased us, and would know who we were.

Humph. I know he has a mind to come into that particular. [*Aside.*

Sir J. B. Ay, he followed us till the gentleman who led the lady in the Indian mantle presented that gay creature to the rustic, and bid him (like Cymon in the fable) grow polite, by falling in love, and let that worthy old gentleman alone, meaning me. The clown was not reform'd, but rudely persisted, and offer'd to force off my mask; with that the gentleman throwing off his own, appeared to be my son, and in his concern for me, tore off that of the nobleman: at this they seized each other, the company called the guards, and in the surprise the lady swoon'd away; upon which my son quitted his adversary, and had now no care but of the lady——when raising her in his arms, "Art thou gone," cry'd he, "for ever—forbid it, Heav'n!"—She revives at his known voice—and with the most familiar, though modest gesture, hangs in safety over his shoulders weeping, but wept as in the arms of one before whom she could give herself a loose, were she not under observation: while she hides her face in his neck, he carefully conveys her from the company.

Humph. I have observed this accident has dwelt upon you very strongly.

Sir J. B. Her uncommon air, her noble modesty, the dignity of her person, and the occasion itself, drew the whole assembly together; and I soon heard it buzz'd about she was the adopted daughter of a famous sea-officer who had serv'd

in France. Now this unexpected and public discovery of my son's so deep concern for her——

Humph. Was what, I suppose, alarm'd Mr Sealand, in behalf of his daughter, to break off the match.

Sir J. B. You are right—he came to me yesterday, and said he thought himself disengaged from the bargain, being credibly informed my son was already marry'd, or worse, to the lady at the masquerade. I palliated matters, and insisted on our agreement: but we parted with little less than a direct breach between us.

Humph. Well, sir, and what notice have you taken of all this to my young master?

Sir J. B. That's what I wanted to debate with you—I have said nothing to him yet—But look ye, Humphrey, if there is so much in this amour of his that he denies upon my summons to marry, I have cause enough to be offended; and then, by my insisting upon his marrying to-day, I shall know how far he is engaged to this lady in masquerade, and from thence only shall be able to take my measures; in the mean time, I would have you find out how far that rogue his man is let into his secret—he, I know, will play tricks as much to cross me as to serve his master.

Humph. Why do you think so of him, sir? I believe he is no worse than I was for you at your son's age.

Sir J. B. I see it in the rascal's looks. But I have dwelt on these things too long: I'll go to my son immediately, and while I'm gone, your part is to convince his rogue, Tom, that I am in earnest. I'll leave him to you. [*Exit.*

Humph. Well, tho' this father and son live as well together as possible, yet their fear of giving each other pain is attended with constant mutual uneasiness. I am sure I have enough to do to be honest, and yet keep well with them both; but they know I love 'em, and that makes the task less painful however.—Oh, here's the prince of poor coxcombs, the representative of all the better fed than taught!—Ho, ho, Tom! whither so gay and so airy this morning?

Enter TOM, *singing.*

Tom. Sir, we servants of single gentlemen are another kind of people than you domestic ordinary drudges that do business; we are rais'd above you: the pleasures of board wages, tavern-dinners, and many a clear gain; vails, alas! you never heard or dreamt of.

Humph. Thou hast follies and vices enough for a man of ten thousand a-year, tho' it is but as t'other day that I sent for you to town to put you into Mr Sealand's family, that you might learn a little before I put you to my young master, who is too gentle for training such a rude thing as you were into proper obedience.——You then pull'd off your hat to every one you met in the street, like a bashful, great, awkward cub as you were. But your great oaken cudgel, when you were a booby, became you much better than that dangling stick at your button, now you are a fop, that's fit for nothing except it hangs there to be ready for your master's hand when you are impertinent.

Tom. Uncle Humphrey, you know my master scorns to strike his servants; you talk as if the world was now just as it was when my old master and you were in your youth——when you went to dinner because it was so much o'clock, when the great blow was given in the hall at the pantry door, and all the family came out of their holes in such strange dresses and formal faces as you see in the pictures in our long gallery in the country.

Humph. Why, you wild rogue!

Tom. You could not fall to your dinner till a formal fellow in a black gown said something over the meat, as if the cook had not made it ready enough.

Humph. Sirrah, who do you prate after?—despising men of sacred characters! I hope you never heard my young master talk so like a profligate.

Tom. Sir, I say you put upon me when I first came to town about being orderly, and the doctrine of wearing shams to make linen last clean a fortnight, keeping my clothes fresh, and wearing a frock within doors.

Humph. Sirrah, I gave you those lessons because I suppos'd at that time your master and you might have din'd at home every day, and cost you nothing; then you might have made you a good family servant; but the gang you have frequented since at chocolate-houses and taverns, in a continual round of noise and extravagance——

Tom. I don't know what you heavy inmates call noise and extravagance; but we gentlemen who are well fed, and cut a figure, sir, think it a fine life, and that we must be very pretty fellows who are kept only to be looked at.

Humph. Very well, sir—I hope the fashion of being lewd and extravagant, despising of decency and order, is almost at an end, since it is arrived at persons of your quality.

Tom. Master Humphrey, ha, ha! you were an unhappy lad to be sent up to town in such queer days as you were. Why now, sir, the lackeys are the men of pleasure of the age, the top gamesters; and many a laced coat about town have had their education in our party-colour'd regiment.—We are false lovers, have a taste of music, poetry, billet-doux, dress, politics, ruin damsels; and when we are weary of this lewd town, and have a mind to take up, whip into our masters' wigs and linen, and marry fortunes.

Humph. Hey-day!

Tom. Nay, sir, our order is carried up to the highest dignities and distinctions: step but into the Painted Chamber—and by our titles you'd take us all for men of quality—then again, come down to the Court of Requests, and you shall see us all laying our broken heads together, for the good of the nation; and though we never carry a question *nemine contradicente*, yet this I can say with a safe conscience, (and I wish every gentleman of our cloth could lay his hand upon his

heart and say the same) that I never took so much as a single mug of beer for my vote in all my life.

Humph. Sirrah, there is no enduring your extravagance; I'll hear you prate no longer: I wanted to see you to inquire how things go with your master, as far as you understand them: I suppose he knows he is to be married to-day.

Tom. Ay, sir, he knows it, and is dress'd as gay as the sun; but, between you and I, my dear! he has a very heavy heart under all that gaiety. As soon as he was dress'd I retir'd, but overheard him sigh in the most heavy manner. He walk'd thoughtfully to and fro in the room, then went into his closet: when he came out he gave me this for his mistress, whose maid, you know—

Humph. Is passionately fond of your fine person.

Tom. The poor fool is so tender, and loves to hear me talk of the world, and the plays, operas, and ridottos for the winter, the Parks and Bellsize for our summer diversions; and, lard! says she, you are so wild—but you have a world of humour.

Humph. Coxcomb! Well, but why don't you run with your master's letter to Mrs Lucinda, as he order'd you?

Tom. Because Mrs Lucinda is not so easily come at as you think for.

Humph. Not easily come at? why, sir, are not her father and my old master agreed that she and Mr Bevil are to be one flesh before to-morrow morning?

Tom. It's no matter for that: her mother, it seems, Mrs Sealand, has not agreed to it; and you must know, Mr Humphrey, that in that family the grey mare is the better horse.

Humph. What dost thou mean?

Tom. In one word, Mrs Sealand pretends to have a will of her own, and has provided a relation of hers, a stiff starch'd philosopher, and a wise fool, for her daughter; for which reason, for these ten days past, she has suffer'd no message nor letter from my master to come near her.

Humph. And where had you this intelligence?

Tom. From a foolish fond soul that can keep nothing from me——one that will deliver this letter too if she is rightly manag'd.

Humph. What, her pretty handmaid, Mrs Phillis?

Tom. Even she, sir. This is the very hour, you know, she usually comes hither, under a pretence of a visit to our housekeeper, forsooth, but in reality to have a glance at——

Humph. Your sweet face, I warrant you.

Tom. Nothing else in nature. You must know I love to fret and play with the little wanton——

Humph. Play with the little wanton! what will this world come to!

Tom. I met her this morning in a new mantua and petticoat, not a bit the worse for her lady's wearing, and she has always new thoughts and new airs with new clothes——then she never fails to steal some glance or gesture from every visitant at their house, and is indeed the whole town of coquettes at second-hand.—But here she comes; in one motion she speaks and describes herself better than all the words in the world can.

Humph. Then I hope, dear sir! when your own affair is over, you will be so good as to mind your master's with her.

Tom. Dear Humphrey! you know my master is my friend, and those are people I never forget——

Humph. Sauciness itself! but I'll leave you to do your best for him. [*Exit.*

Enter PHILLIS.

Phil. Oh, Mr Thomas, is Mrs Sugarkey at home?—Lard! one is almost asham'd to pass along the streets. The town is quite empty, and nobody of fashion left in it; and the ordinary people do so stare to see any thing dress'd like a woman of condition, as it were on the same floor with them, pass by. Alas! alas! it is a sad thing to walk. O fortune, fortune!

Tom. What! a sad thing to walk! why, madam Phillis, do you wish yourself lame?

Phil. No, Mr Thomas, but I wish I were generally carried in a coach or chair, and of a fortune neither to stand nor go, but to totter, or slide, to be short-sighted, or stare, to fleer in the face, to look distant, to observe, to overlook, yet all become me; and if I were rich, I could twine and loll as well as the best of them. Oh, Tom, Tom! is it not a pity that you should be so great a coxcomb, and I so great a coquette, and yet be such poor devils as we are?

Tom. Mrs Phillis, I am your humble servant for that——

Phil. Yes, Mr Thomas, I know how much you are my humble servant, and know what you said to Mrs Judy upon seeing her in one of her lady's cast manteaus, that any one would have thought her the lady, and that she had ordered the other to wear it till it sat easy—for now only it was becoming—to my lady it was only a covering, to Mrs Judy it was a habit. This you said after somebody or other. Oh Tom, Tom! thou art as false and as base as the best gentleman of them all: but, you wretch! talk to me no more of the old odious subject: don't, I say.

Tom. I know not how to resist your commands, madam. [*In a submissive tone, retiring.*

Phil. Commands about parting are grown mighty easy to you of late.

Tom. Oh, I have her! I have nettled and put her into the right temper to be wrought upon and set a-parting. [*Aside.*]—Why truly, to be plain with you, Mrs Phillis, I can take little comfort of late in frequenting your house.

Phil. Pray, Mr Thomas, what is it, all of a sudden, offends your nicety at our house?

Tom. I don't care to speak particulars, but I dislike the whole.

Phil. I thank you, sir; I am a part of that whole.

Tom. Mistake me not, good Phillis.

Phil. Good Phillis! saucy enough. But however——

Tom. I say it is, that thou art a part which gives me pain for the disposition of the whole. You must know, madam, to be serious, I am a man, at the bottom, of prodigious nice honour. You are too much expos'd to company at your house. To be plain, I don't like so many that would be your mistress's lovers whispering to you.

Phil. Don't think to put that upon me. You say this, because I wrung you to the heart when I touched your guilty conscience about Judy.

Tom. Ah, Phillis, Phillis! if you but knew my heart!

Phil. I know too much on't.

Tom. Nay, then, poor Crispo's fate and mine are——therefore give me leave to say, or sing at least, as he does upon the same occasion———

[*Sings.*

Se vedette, &c.

Phil. What, do you think I'm to be fobb'd off with a song?—I don't question but you have sung the same to Mrs Judy too.

Tom. Don't disparage your charms, good Phillis, with jealousy of so worthless an object; besides, she is a poor hussy; and if you doubt the sincerity of my love, you will allow me true to my interest. You are a fortune, Phillis———

Phil. What would the fop be at now? In good time, indeed, you shall be setting up for a fortune.

Tom. Dear Mrs Phillis! you have such a spirit that we shall never be dull in marriage, when we come together. But I tell you, you are a fortune, and you have an estate in my hands.

[*He puts out a purse, she eyes it.*

Phil. What pretence have I to what is in your hands, Mr Thomas?

Tom. As thus: there are hours, you know, when a lady is neither pleased nor displeased, neither sick nor well, when she lolls or loiters, when she is without desires, from having more of every thing than she knows what to do with.

Phil. Well, what then?

Tom. When she has not life enough to keep her bright eyes quite open to look at her own dear image in the glass.

Phil. Explain thyself, and don't be so fond of thy own prating.

Tom. There are also prosperous and good natur'd moments, as when a knot or a patch is happily fix'd, when the complexion particularly flourishes.

Phil. Well, what then? I have not patience!

Tom. Why then—or on the like occasions—we servants, who have skill to know how to time business, see, when such a pretty folded thing as this is [*Shews a letter*] may be presented, laid, or dropped, as best suits the present humour. And, madam, because it is a long wearisome journey to run through all the several stages of a lady's temper, my master, who is the most reasonable man in the world, presents you this to bear your charges on the road. [*Gives her the purse.*

Phil. Now, you think me a corrupt hussy.

Tom. O fie! I only think you'll take the letter.

Phil. Nay, I know you do; but I know my own innocence: I take it for my mistress's sake.

Tom. I know it, my pretty one! I know it.

Phil. Yes, I say, I do it because I would not have my mistress deluded by one who gives no proof of his passion: but I'll talk more of this as you see me on my way home.——No, Tom; I assure thee I take this trash of thy master's, not for the value of the thing, but as it convinces me he has a true respect for my mistress. I remember a verse to the purpose:—

They may be false who languish and complain,
But they who part with money never feign.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—BEVIL *Junior's Lodgings.*

BEVIL, *Jun. reading.*

B. jun. These moral writers practise virtue after death. This charming vision of Mirza! Such an author, consulted in a morning, sets the spirits for the vicissitudes of the day, better than the glass does a man's person. But what a day have I to go through? To put on an easy look with an aching heart!——If this lady, my father urges me to marry, should not refuse me, my dilemma is insupportable. But why should I fear it? Is not she in equal distress with me? Has not the letter I have sent her this morning confess'd my inclination to another? Nay, have I not moral assurances of her engagements too, to my friend Myrtle? It's impossible but she must give in to it; for sure to be deny'd is a favour any man may pretend to. It must be so.——Well then, with the assurance of being rejected, I think I may confidently say to my father, I am ready to marry her—then let me resolve upon (what I am not very good at) an honest dissimulation.

Enter TOM.

Tom. Sir John Bevil, sir, is in the next room.

B. jun. Dunce! why did you not bring him in?

Tom. I told him, sir, you were in your closet.

B. jun. I thought you had known, sir, it was my duty to see my father any where.

[*Going himself to the door.*

Tom. The devil's in my master! he has always more wit than I have. [*Aside.*

BEVIL, *Jun. introducing Sir* JOHN.

B. jun. Sir, you are the most gallant, the most complaisant, of all parents.—Sure 'tis not a compliment to say these lodgings are yours.—Why would you not walk in, sir?

Sir J. B. I was loath to interrupt you unseasonably on your wedding-day.

B. jun. One to whom I am beholden for my birth-day might have used less ceremony.

Sir J. B. Well, son, I have intelligence you

have writ to your mistress this morning. It would please my curiosity to know the contents of a wedding-day letter, for courtship must then be over.

B. jun. I assure you, sir, there was no insolence in it, upon the prospect of such a vast fortune's being added to our family, but much acknowledgment of the lady's great desert.

Sir J. B. But, dear Jack, are you in earnest in all this? and will you really marry her?

B. jun. Did I ever disobey any command of yours, sir? Nay, any inclination that I saw you bent upon?

Sir J. B. Why, I cann't say you have, son: but methinks in this whole business you have not been so warm as I could have wished you; you have visited her, it is true, but you have not been particular.—Every one knows you can say and do as handsome things as any man; but you have done nothing but lived in the general, being complaisant only.

B. jun. As I am ever prepared to marry if you bid me, so I am ready to let it alone if you will have me. [*Humphrey enters unobserved.*

Sir J. B. Look you there now! Why, what am I to think of this so absolute and so indifferent a resignation?

B. jun. Think that I am still your son, sir—sir—you have been married, and I have not; and you have, sir, found the inconvenience there is when a man weds with too much love in his head. I have been told, sir, that at the time you married, you made a mighty bustle on the occasion—there was challenging and fighting, scaling walls—locking up the lady—and the gallant under an arrest for fear of killing all his rivals. Now, sir, I suppose you having found the ill consequence of these strong passions and prejudices, in preference of one woman to another, in case of a man's becoming a widower—

Sir J. B. How is this?

B. jun. I say, sir, experience has made you wiser in your care of me; for, sir, since you lost my dear mother, your time has been so heavy, so lonely, and so tasteless, that you are so good as to guard me against the like unhappiness, by marrying me prudentially by way of bargain and sale; for, as you well judge, a woman that is espoused for a fortune is yet a better bargain if she dies; for then a man well enjoys what he did marry, the money, and is disencumbered of what he did not marry, the woman.

Sir J. B. But pray, sir, do you think Lucinda then a woman of such little merit?

B. jun. Pardon me, sir, I don't carry it so far neither; I am rather afraid I shall like her too well; she has, for one of her fortune, a great many needless and superfluous good qualities.

Sir J. B. I am afraid, son, there's something I don't see yet, something that's smothered under all this raillery.

B. jun. Not in the least, sir.—If the lady is dressed and ready, you see I am. I suppose the lawyers are ready too.

Enter HUMPHREY.

Humph. Sir, Mr Sealand is at the coffee-house, and has sent to speak with you.

Sir J. B. Oh! that's well! then I warrant the lawyers are ready. Son, you'll be in the way, you say———

B jun. If you please, sir, I'll take a chair and go to Mr Sealand's, where the young lady and I will wait your leisure.

Sir J. B. By no means—the old fellow will be so vain if he sees———

B. jun. Ay—but the young lady, sir, will think me so indifferent———

Humph. Ay—there you are right—press your readiness to go to the bride—he won't let you. [*Aside to* BEV. *jun.*

B. jun. Are you sure of that? [*Aside to* HUMPH.

Humph. How he likes being prevented! [*Aside.*

Sir J. B. No, no; you are an hour or two too early. [*Looking on his watch.*

B. jun. You'll allow me, sir, to think it too late to visit a beautiful, virtuous, young woman, in the pride and bloom of life, ready to give herself to my arms, and to place her happiness or misery for the future in being agreeable or displeasing to me, is a——Call a chair.

Sir J. B. No, no, no, dear Jack! Besides, this Sealand is a moody old fellow. There's no dealing with some people but by managing with indifference. We must leave to him the conduct of this day; it is the last of his commanding his daughter.

B. jun. Sir, he cann't take it ill that I am impatient to be hers.

Sir J. B. Pray let me govern in this matter. You cann't tell how humoursome old fellows are.—There's no offering reason to some of 'em, especially when they are rich.—If my son should see him before I've brought Old Sealand into better temper, the match would be impracticable. [*Aside.*

Humph. Pray, sir, let me beg you to let Mr Bevil go.—See whether he will not. [*Aside to Sir* JOHN.]—[*Then to* BEVIL.] Pray, sir, command yourself; since you see my master is positive, it is better you should not go.

B. jun. My father commands me as to the object of my affections, but I hope he will not as to the warmth and height of them.

Sir J. B. So I must even leave things as I found them, and in the mean time at least keep old Sealand out of his sight.—Well, son, I'll go myself and take orders in your affair—You'll be in the way, I suppose, if I send to you—I'll leave your old friend with you—Humphrey—don't let him stir, d'ye hear. Your servant, your servant. [*Exit Sir* JOHN.

Humph. I have a sad time on it, sir, between you and my master—I see you are unwilling, and I know his violent inclinations for the match.—

I must betray neither, and yet deceive you both, for your common good.——Heaven grant a good end of this matter: but there is a lady, sir, that gives your father much trouble and sorrow—— You'll pardon me.

B. jun. Humphrey, I know thou art a friend to both, and in that confidence I dare tell thee—that lady—is a woman of honour and virtue. You may assure yourself I never will marry without my father's consent; but give me leave to say too, this declaration does not come up to a promise that I will take whomsoever he pleases.

Humph. Come, sir, I wholly understand you: you would engage my services to free you from this woman whom my master intends you, to make way in time for the woman you have really a mind to.

B. jun. Honest Humphrey! you have always been an useful friend to my father and myself; I beg you to continue your good offices, and don't let us come to the necessity of a dispute, for if we should dispute, I must either part with more than life, or lose the best of fathers.

Humph. My dear master! were I but worthy to know this secret that so near concerns you, my life, my all, should be engaged to serve you. This, sir, I dare promise, that I am sure I will and can be secret: your trust, at worst, but leaves you where you were; and if I cannot serve you, I will at once be plain and tell you so.

B. jun. That's all I ask. Thou hast made it now my interest to trust thee.——Be patient then, and hear the story of my heart.

Humph. I am all attention, sir.

B. jun. You may remember, Humphrey, that in my last travels my father grew uneasy at my making so long a stay at Toulon.

Humph. I remember it; he was apprehensive some woman had laid hold of you.

B. jun. His fears were just, for there I first saw this lady: she is of English birth: her father's name was Danvers, a younger brother of an ancient family, and originally an eminent merchant of Bristol, who, upon repeated misfortunes, was reduced to go privately to the Indies. In this retreat, Providence again grew favourable to his industry, and in six years time restored him to his former fortunes. On this he sent directions over that his wife and little family should follow him to the Indies. His wife, impatient to obey such welcome orders, would not wait the leisure of a convoy, but took the first occasion of a single ship, and with her husband's sister only and this daughter, then scarce seven years old, undertook the fatal voyage; for here, poor creature, she lost her liberty and life: she and her family, with all they had, were unfortunately taken by a privateer from Toulon. Being thus made a prisoner, though, as such, not ill treated, yet the fright, the shock, and the cruel disappointment, seized with such violence upon her unhealthy frame, she sickened, pined, and died at sea.

Humph. Poor soul! Oh, the helpless infant!

B. jun. Her sister yet survived, and had the care of her; the captain, too, proved to have humanity, and became a father to her; for having himself married an English woman, and being childless, he brought home into Toulon this her little countrywoman, this orphan I may call her, presenting her, with all her dead mother's moveables of value, to his wife, to be educated as his own adopted daughter.

Humph. Fortune here seemed again to smile on her.

B. jun. Only to make her frowns more terrible; for in his height of fortune this captain too, her benefactor, unfortunately was killed at sea, and dying intestate, his estate fell wholly to an advocate, his brother, who coming soon to take possession, there found, among his other riches, this blooming virgin at his mercy.

Humph. He durst not sure abuse his power!

B. jun. No wonder if his pampered blood was fired at the sight of her.—In short, he loved; but when all arts and gentle means had failed to move, he offered too his menaces in vain, denouncing vengeance on her cruelty, demanding her to account for all her maintenance from her childhood, seized on her little fortune as his own inheritance, and was dragging her by violence to prison, when Providence at the instant interposed, and sent me by miracle to relieve her.

Humph. 'Twas Providence, indeed! But pray, sir, after all this trouble, how came this lady at last to England?

B. jun. The disappointed advocate, finding she had so unexpected a support, on cooler thoughts descended to a composition, which I, without her knowledge, secretly discharged.

Humph. That generous concealment made the obligation double.

B. jun. Having thus obtained her liberty, I prevailed, not without some difficulty, to see her safe to England, where we no sooner arrived, but my father, jealous of my being imprudently engaged, immediately proposed this other fatal match that hangs upon my quiet.

Humph. I find, sir, you are irrecoverably fixed upon this lady.

B. jun. As my vital life dwells in my heart—and yet you see what I do to please my father; walk in this pageantry of dress, this splendid covering of sorrow—But, Humphrey, you have your lesson.

Humph. Now, sir, I have but one material question—

B. jun. Ask it freely.

Humph. Is it then your own passion for this secret lady, or hers for you, that gives you this aversion to the match your father has proposed you?

B. jun. I shall appear, Humphrey, more romantic in my answer than in all the rest of my story; for though I dote on her to death, and have no little reason to believe she has the same thoughts for me, yet, in all my acquaintance and utmost privacies with her, I never once directly told her that I loved.

Humph. How was it possible to avoid it?

B. jun. My tender obligations to my father have laid so inviolable a restraint upon my conduct, that till I have his consent to speak, I am determined on that subject to be dumb for ever. ——An honourable retreat shall always be at least within my power, however Fortune may dispose of me; the lady may repine, perhaps, but never shall reproach me.

Humph. Well, sir, to your praise be it spoken, you are certainly the most unfashionable lover in Great Britain.

Enter TOM.

Tom. Sir, Mr Myrtle's at the next door, and if you are at leisure, will be glad to wait on you.

B. jun. Whene'er he pleases——Hold, Tom; did you receive no answer to my letter?

Tom. Sir, I was desired to call again; for I was told her mother would not let her be out of her sight; but about an hour hence Mrs Phillis said I should have one.

B. jun. Very well.

Humph. Sir, I will take another opportunity; in the mean time I only think it proper to tell you, that, from a secret I know, you may appear to your father as forward as you please to marry Lucinda, without the least hazard of its coming to a conclusion.——Sir, your most obedient servant.

B. Jun. Honest Humphrey! continue but my friend in this exigence, and you shall always find me yours. [*Exit* HUMPH.] I long to hear how my letter has succeeded with Lucinda. But I think it cannot fail; for at worst, were it possible she should take it ill, her resentment of my indifference may as probably occasion a delay as her taking it right.——Poor Myrtle! what terrors must he be in all this while!——Since he knows she is offered to me, and refused to him, there is no conversing or taking any measures with him for his own service.—But I ought to bear with my friend, and use him as one in adversity.

All his disquietudes by my own I prove,
For *none* exceeds perplexity in love.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I—*Continues.*

Enter BEVIL, *Jun. and* TOM.

Tom. Sir, Mr Myrtle.

B. jun. Very well——Do you step again, and wait for an answer to my letter. [*Exit* TOM.

Enter MYRTLE.

Well, Charles, why so much care in thy countenance? Is there any thing in this world deserves it? You who used to be so gay, so open, so vacant!

Myrt. I think we have of late chang'd complexions. You who us'd to be much the graver man are now all air in your behaviour.——But the cause of my concern may, for aught I know, be the same object that gives you all this satisfaction. In a word, I am told that you are this very day (and your dress confirms me in it) to be married to Lucinda.

B. jun. You are not misinformed.——Nay, put not on the terrors of a rival till you hear me out. I shall disoblige the best of fathers if I don't seem ready to marry Lucinda; and you know I have ever told you, you might make use of my secret resolution never to marry her for your own service as you please: but I am now driven to the extremity of immediately refusing or complying, unless you help me to escape the match.

Myrt. Escape, sir! neither her merit nor her fortune are below your acceptance. Escaping, do you call it?

B. jun. Dear sir! do you wish I should desire the match?

Myrt. No——but such is my humorous and sickly state of mind, since it has been able to relish nothing but Lucinda, that though I must owe my happiness to your aversion to this marriage, I cann't bear to hear her spoken of with levity or unconcern.

B. jun. Pardon me, sir, I shall transgress that way no more. She has understanding, beauty, shape, complexion, wit———

Myrt. Nay, dear Bevil! don't speak of her as if you lov'd her neither.

B. jun. Why then, to give you ease at once, though I allow Lucinda to have good sense, wit, beauty, and virtue, I know another in whom these qualities appear to me more amiable than in her.

Myrt. There you spoke like a reasonable and good-natur'd friend. When you acknowledge her merit, and own your prepossession for another, at once you gratify my fondness and cure my jealousy.

B. jun. But all this while you take no notice, you have no apprehension of another man, that has twice the fortune of either of us.

Myrt. Cimberton! Hang him, a formal, philosophical, pedantic coxcomb!——for the sot, with all these crude notions of divers things, under the direction of great vanity and very little judgment, shews his strongest bias is avarice, which is so predominant in him, that he will examine the limbs of his mistress with the caution of a jockey, and pays no more compliment to her personal charms than if she were a mere breeding animal.

B. jun. Are you sure that is not affected? I have known some women sooner set on fire by that sort of negligence, than by all the blaze and ceremony of a court.

Myrt. No, no; hang him! the rogue has no art; it is pure simple insolence and stupidity.

B. jun. Yet with all this I don't take him for a fool.

Myrt. I own the man is not a natural; he has a very quick sense, though a very slow understanding——he says indeed many things that want only the circumstances of time and place to be very just and agreeable.

B. jun. Well, you may be sure of me if you can disappoint him; but my intelligence says the mother has actually sent for the conveyancer to draw articles for his marriage with Lucinda, though those for mine with her are by her father's order ready for signing; but it seems she has not thought fit to consult either him or his daughter in the matter.

Myrt. Pshaw! a poor troublesome woman! —Neither Lucinda nor her father will ever be brought to comply with it—besides, I am sure Cimberton can make no settlement upon her without the concurrence of his great uncle, Sir Geoffry in the west.

B. jun. Well, sir, and I can tell you that's the very point that is now laid before her counsel, to know whether a firm settlement can be made without this uncle's actually joining in it.—Now, pray consider, sir, when my affair with Lucinda comes, as it soon must, to an open rupture, how are you sure that Cimberton's fortune may not then tempt her father too to hear his proposals?

Myrt. There you are right indeed; that must be provided against.—Do you know who are her counsel?

B. jun. Yes, for your service I have found out that too; they are Serjeant Bramble and old Target.—By the way, they are neither of 'em known in the family: now I was thinking why you might not put a couple of false counsels upon her, to delay and confound matters a little—besides, it may probably let you into the bottom of her whole design against you.

Myrt. As how, pray?

B. jun. Why, cann't you slip on a black wig and a gown, and be old Bramble yourself?

Myrt. Ha! I don't dislike it—but what shall I do for a brother in the case?

B. jun. What think you of my fellow Tom? The rogue's intelligent, and is a good mimic; all his part will be but to stutter heartily, for that's old Target's case—nay, it would be an immoral thing to mock him, were it not that his impatience is the occasion of its breaking out to that degree.—The conduct of the scene will chiefly lie upon you.

Myrt. I like it of all things; if you'll send Tom to my chambers, I will give him full instructions. This will certainly give me occasion to raise difficulties, to puzzle or confound her project for a while at least.

B. jun. I warrant you success; so far we are right then. And now, Charles, your apprehension of my marrying her is all you have to get over.

Myrt. Dear Bevil! though I know you are my friend, yet when I abstract myself from my own interest in the thing, I know no objection she can make to you, or you to her, and therefore hope———

B. jun. Dear Myrtle! I am as much obliged to you for the cause of your suspicion, as I am offended at the effect; but be assured I am taking measures for your certain security, and that all things, with regard to me, will end in your entire satisfaction.

Myrt. Well, I'll promise you to be as easy and as confident as I can, though I cannot but remember that I have more than life at stake on your fidelity. [*Going,*

B. jun. Then, depend upon it, you have no chance against you.

Myrt. Nay, no ceremony; you know I must be going. [*Exit* MYRT.

B. jun. Well, this is another instance of the perplexities which arise too in faithful friendship. We must often in this life go on in our good offices, even under the displeasure of those to whom we do them, in compassion to their weaknesses and mistakes. But all this while, poor Indiana is tortured with the doubt of me; she has no support or comfort but in my fidelity, yet sees me daily press'd to marriage with another. How painful, in such a crisis, must be every hour she thinks on me! I'll let her see, at least, my conduct to her is not chang'd: I'll take this opportunity to visit her; for though the religious vow I have made to my father restrains me from ever marrying without his approbation, yet that confines me not from seeing a virtuous woman, that is the pure delight of my eyes, and the guiltless joy of my heart. But the best condition of human life is but a gentler misery.

To hope for perfect happiness is vain,
And love has ever its allays of pain. [*Exit*

SCENE II.—INDIANA'S *Lodgings.*

Enter ISABELLA *and* INDIANA.

Isab. Yes—I say 'tis artifice, dear child! I say to thee, again and again, 'tis all skill and management.

Ind. Will you persuade me there can be an ill design in supporting me in the condition of a woman of quality! attended, dress'd, and lodg'd, like one in my appearance abroad, and in my furniture at home, every way in the most sumptuous manner, and he that does it has an artifice, a design in it?

Isab. Yes, yes.

Ind. And all this without so much as explaining to me that all about me comes from him?

Isab. Ay, ay—the more for that—that keeps the title to all you have the more in him

Ind. The more in him!—he scorns the thought—

Isab. Then he—he—he———

Ind. Well, be not so eager.—If he is an ill man let's look into his stratagems: here's another of them: [*Shewing a letter*] here's two hundred and fifty pounds in bank notes, with these words, 'To pay for the set of dressing plate which will be brought home to-morrow.' Why, dear aunt! now here's another piece of skill for you which I own I cannot comprehend—and it it is with a bleeding heart I hear you say any thing to the disadvantage of Mr Bevil. When he is present, I look upon him as one to whom I owe my life and the support of it; then again, as the man who loves me with sincerity and honour. When his eyes are cast another way, and I dare survey him, my heart is painfully divided between shame and love—Oh, I could tell you———

Isab. Oh, you need not; I imagine all this for you.

Ind. This is my state of mind in his presence, and when he is absent, you are ever dinning my ears with notions of the arts of men, that his hidden bounty, his respectful conduct, his careful provision for me, after his preserving me from the utmost misery, are certain signs he means nothing but to make I know not what of me.

Isab. Oh, you have a sweet opinion of him truly!

Ind. I have, when I am with him, ten thousand things, besides my sex's natural decency and shame, to suppress my heart, that yearns to thank, to praise, to say it loves him. I say thus it is with me while I see him, and in his absence I am entertain'd with nothing but your endeavours to tear this amiable image from my heart, and in its stead to place a base dissembler, an artful invader of my happiness, my innocence, my honour.

Isab. Ah, poor soul! has not his plot taken? don't you die for him? has not the way he has taken been the most proper with you? O ho! he has sense, and has judged the thing right.

Ind. Go on then, since nothing can answer you; say what you will of him.—Heigh ho!

Isab. Heigh ho! indeed. It is better to say so as you are now than as many others are. There are among the destroyers of women the gentle, the generous, the mild, the affable, the humble, who all, soon after their success in their designs, turn to the contrary of those characters. I will own to you, Mr Bevil carries his hypocrisy the best of any man living; but still he is a man, and therefore a hypocrite. They have usurp'd an exemption from shame, from any baseness, any cruelty towards us. They embrace without love; they make vows without conscience of obligation; they are partners, nay, seducers to the crime, wherein they pretend to be less guilty.

Ind. That's truly observ'd. [*Aside.*] But what's all this to Bevil?

Isab. This is to Bevil and all mankind. Trust not those who will think the worse of you for your confidence in them; serpents who lie in wait fo doves. Won't you be on your guard against those who would betray you? won't you doubt those who would contemn you for believing 'em? Take it from me, fair and natural dealing is to invite injuries; 'tis bleating to escape wolves who would devour you: Such is the world, and such (since the behaviour of one man to myself) have I believed all the rest of the sex. [*Aside.*

Ind. I will not doubt the truth of Bevil, I will not doubt it. he has not spoken it by an organ that is given to lying: his eyes are all that have ever told me that he was mine: I know his virtue, I know his filial piety, and ought to trust his management with a father to whom he has uncommon obligations. What have I to be concern'd for? My lesson is very short. If he takes me for ever, my purpose of life is only to please him. If he leaves me,(which Heaven avert,)I know he'll do it nobly; and I shall have nothing to do but to learn to die, after worse than death has happen'd to me.

Isab. Ay, do persist in your credulity! flatter yourself that a man of his figure and fortune will make himself the jest of the town, and marry a handsome beggar for love.

Ind. The town! I must tell you, madam, the fools that laugh at Mr Bevil will but make themselves more ridiculous; his actions are the result of thinking, and he has sense enough to make even virtue fashionable.

Isab. O' my conscience he has turned her head! Come, come; if he were the honest fool you take him for, why has he kept you here these three weeks without sending you to Bristol in search of your father, your family, and your relations?

Ind. I am convinc'd he still designs it; and that nothing keeps him here but the necessity of not coming to an open breach with his father in regard to the match he has propos'd him: besides, has he not writ to Bristol? and has not he advice that my father has not been heard of there almost these twenty years?

Isab. All sham, mere evasion; he is afraid, if he should carry you thither, your honest relations may take you out of his hands, and so blow up all his wicked hopes at once.

Ind. Wicked hopes! did I ever give him any such?

Isab. Has he ever given you any honest ones? Can you say in your conscience he has ever once offer'd to marry you?

Ind. No; but by his behaviour I am convinc'd he will offer it the moment 'tis in his power, or consistent with his honour to make such a promise good to me.

Isab. His honour!

Ind. I will rely upon it; therefore desire you will not make my life uneasy by these ungrateful jealousies of one to whom I am and wish to be oblig'd; for from his integrity alone I have resolv'd to hope for happiness.

Isab. Nay, I have done my duty; if you won't see, at your peril be it.

Ind. Let it be. This is his hour of visiting me. [*Apart.*

Isab. Oh! to be sure, keep up your forms; do not see him in a bed-chamber. This is pure prudence, when she is liable, whene'er he meets her, to be conveyed where'er he pleases. [*Apart.*

Ind. All the rest of my life is but waiting till he comes: I live only while I am with him. [*Exit.*

Isab. Well, go thy way, thou wilful innocent! I once had almost as much love for a man who poorly left me to marry an estate—and I am now, against my will, what they call an old maid—but I will not let the peevishness of that condition grow upon me—only keep up the suspicion of it, to prevent this creature's being any other than a virgin, except upon proper terms. [*Exit.*

Re-enter INDIANA, *speaking to a Servant.*

Ind. Desire Mr Bevil to walk in.——Design! impossible! a base designing mind could never think of what he hourly puts in practice—and yet, since the late rumour of his marriage he seems more reserv'd than formerly—he sends in too before he sees me, to know if I am at leisure.—Such new respect may cover coldness in the heart—it certainly makes me thoughtful—I'll know the worst at once; I'll lay such fair occasions in his way, that it shall be impossible to avoid an explanation——for these doubts are insupportable.—But see, he comes, and clears them all.

Enter BEVIL, *Jun.*

B. jun. Madam, your most obedient.—I am afraid I broke in upon your rest last night—'twas very late before we parted, but 'twas your own fault; I never saw you in such agreeable humour.

Ind. I am extremely glad we are both pleas'd; for I thought I never saw you better company.

B. jun. Me! madam: you rally; I said very little.

Ind. But I am afraid you heard me say a great deal; and when a woman is in the talking vein, the most agreeable thing a man can do, you know, is to have patience to hear her.

B. jun. Then it's pity, madam, you should ever be silent, that we might be always agreeable to one another.

Ind. If I had your talent or power to make my actions speak for me, I might indeed be silent, and yet pretend to something more than the agreeable.

B. jun. If I might be vain of any thing in my power, madam, it is that my understanding, from all your sex, has mark'd you out as the most deserving object of my esteem.

Ind. Should I think I deserve this, it were enough to make my vanity forfeit the esteem you offer me.

B. jun. How so, madam?

Ind. Because esteem is the result of reason, and to deserve it from good sense the height of human glory.—Nay, I had rather a man of honour should pay me that, than all the homage of a sincere and humble love.

B. jun. You certainly distinguish right, madam; love often kindles from external merit only—

Ind. But esteem arises from a higher source, the merit of the soul—

B. jun. True——and great souls only can deserve it. [*Bowing respectfully.*

Ind. Now I think they are greater still that can so charitably part with it.

B. jun. Now, madam, you make me vain, since the utmost pride and pleasure of my life is, that I esteem you—as I ought.

Ind. [*Aside.*] As he ought! still more perplexing! he neither saves nor kills my hope.

B. jun. But, madam, we grow grave, methinks—let's find some other subject.——Pray, how did you like the opera last night?

Ind. First, give me leave to thank you for my tickets.

B. jun. Oh! your servant, madam.—But, pray, tell me; you, now, who are never partial to the fashion, I fancy, must be the properest judge of a mighty dispute among the ladies; that is, whether Crispo or Griselda is the more agreeable entertainment.

Ind. With submission, now, I cannot be a proper judge of this question.

B. jun. How so, madam?

Ind. Because I find I have a partiality for one of them.

B. jun. Pray, which is that?

Ind. I do not know—there's something in that rural cottage of Griselda, her forlorn condition, her poverty, her solitude, her resignation, her innocent slumbers, and that lulling *dolce sogno* that's sung over her, it had an effect upon me that—In short, I never was so well deceiv'd at any of them.

B. jun. Oh! now, then, I can account for the dispute: Griselda, it seems, is the distress of an injur'd innocent woman, Crispo that only of a man in the same condition; therefore, the men are mostly concerned for Crispo, and, by a natural indulgence, both sexes for Griselda.

Ind. So that judgment, you think, ought to be for one, though fancy and complaisance have got ground for the other. Well, I believe you will never give me leave to dispute with you on any subject, for I own Crispo has its charms for me too, though, in the main, all the pleasure the best opera gives us is but a keen sensation.—Methinks 'tis pity the mind cann't have a little more share in the entertainment.—The music is certainly fine; but, in my thoughts, there's none of your composers come up to old Shakespeare and Otway.

B. jun. How, madam! why, if a woman of your sense were to say this in a drawing-room——

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir, here's Signior Carbonelli says he waits your commands in the next room.

B. jun. A-propos! you were saying yesterday, madam, you had a mind to hear him.—Will you give him leave to entertain you now?

Ind. By all means. Desire the gentleman to walk in. [*Exit Servant.*

B. jun. I fancy you will find something in his hand that is uncommon.

Ind. You are always finding ways, Mr Bevil, to make life seem less tedious to me.

Enter Music-Master.

When the gentleman pleases.

[*After a sonata is played,* BEVIL, *jun. waits on the master to the door,* &c.]

B. jun. You smile, madam, to see me so complaisant to one whom I pay for his visit. Now, I own, I think it not enough barely to pay those whose talents are superior to our own, (I mean such talents as would become our condition if we had them); methinks, we ought to do something more than barely gratify them for what they do at our command, only because their fortune is below us.

Ind. You say I smile; I assure you it was a smile of approbation; for, indeed, I cannot but think it the distinguished part of a gentleman to make his superiority of fortune as easy to his inferiors as he can.—Now, once more to try him. [*Aside.*]——I was saying just now, I believe you would never let me dispute with you, and I dare say, it will always be so: however, I must have your opinion upon a subject which created a debate betwixt my aunt and me just before you came hither; she would needs have it, that no man ever does any extraordinary kindness or service for a woman but for his own sake.

B. jun. Well, madam! indeed, I cann't but be of her mind.

Ind. What, though he should maintain and support her, without demanding any thing of her on her part!

B. jun. Why, madam, is making an expence in the service of a valuable woman, (for such I must suppose her,) though she should never do him any favour, nay, though she should never know who did her such service, such a mighty heroic business?

Ind. Certainly! I should think he must be a man of an uncommon mould.

B. jun. Dear madam! why so? 'tis but at best a better taste in expence. To bestow upon one whom he may think one of the ornaments of the whole creation; to be conscious that from his superfluity an innocent, a virtuous spirit is supported above the temptations, the sorrows of life; that he sees satisfaction, health, and gladness in her countenance, while he enjoys the happiness of seeing her: (as that I will suppose too, or he must be too abstracted, too insensible,) I say, if he is allowed to delight in that prospect, alas! what mighty matter is there in all this?

Ind. No mighty matter in so disinterested a friendship!

B. jun. Disinterested! I cann't think him so. Your hero, madam, is no more than what every gentleman ought to be, and I believe very many are——He is only one who takes more delight in reflections than in sensations; he is more pleased with thinking than eating; that's the utmost you can say of him——Why, madam, a greater expence than all this men lay out upon an unnecessary stable of horses.

Ind. Can you be sincere in what you say?

B. jun. You may depend upon it, if you know any such man, he does not love dogs inordinately.

Ind. No, that he does not.

B. jun. Nor cards, nor dice.

Ind. No.

B. jun. Nor bottle-companions.

Ind. No.

B. jun. Nor loose women.

Ind. No, I'm sure he does not.

B. jun. Take my word then, if your admired hero is not liable to any of these kind of demands, there's no such pre-eminence in this as you imagine: nay, this way of expence you speak of, is what exalts and raises him that has a taste for it; and, at the same time, his delight is incapable of satiety, disgust, or penitence.

Ind. But, still, I insist, his having no private interest in the action makes it prodigious, almost incredible.

B. jun. Dear madam! I never knew you more mistaken. Why, who can be more an usurer than he who lays out his money in such valuable purchases? If pleasure be worth purchasing, how great a pleasure is it to him, who has a true taste of life, to ease an aching heart; to see the human countenance lighted up into smiles of joy, on the receipt of a bit of ore, which is superfluous, and otherwise useless, in a man's own pocket! What could a man do better with his cash? This is the effect of a humane disposition, where there is only a general tie of nature and common necessity; what then must it be, when we serve an object of merit, of admiration!

Ind. Well, the more you argue against it, the more I shall admire the generosity.

B. jun. Nay—Then, madam, 'tis time to fly, after a declaration that my opinion strengthens my adversary's argument—I had best hasten to my appointment with Mr Myrtle, and be gone while we are friends, and—before things are brought to an extremity. [*Exit carelessly.*

Enter ISABELLA.

Isab. Well, madam, what think you of him now, pray?

Ind. I protest I begin to fear he is wholly disinterested in what he does for me. On my heart, he has no other view but the mere pleasure of doing it, and has neither good or bad designs upon me.

Isab. Ah, dear niece! don't be in fear of both; I'll warrant you, you will know time enough that he is not indifferent.

Ind. You please me when you tell me so: for, if he has any wishes towards me, I know he will not pursue them but with honour.

Isab. I wish I were as confident of one as t'other.—I saw the respectful downcast o' his eye when you catch'd him gazing at you during the music. He, I warrant, was surprised as if he

had been taken stealing your watch. Oh, the undissembled guilty look!

Ind. But did you observe any thing really? I thought he look'd most charmingly graceful. How engaging is modesty in a man, when one knows there is a great mind within! So tender a confusion, and yet, in other respects, so much himself, so collected, so dauntless, so determin'd!

Isab. Ah, niece! there is a sort of bashfulness which is the best engine to carry on a shameless purpose. Some men's modesty serves their wickedness, as hypocrisy gains the respect due to piety. But I will own to you there is one hopeful symptom, if there could be such a thing as a disinterested lover; but till—till—till—

Ind. 'Till what?

Isab. Till I know whether Mr Myrtle and Mr Bevil are really friends or foes—and that I will be convinc'd of before I sleep; for you shall not be deceiv'd. [*Exit* ISAB.

Ind. I'm sure I never shall, if your fears can guard me. In the mean time, I'll wrap myself up in the integrity of my own heart, nor dare to doubt of his.

As conscious honour all his actions steers,
So conscious innocence dispels my fears.
[*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—SEALAND'S *House.*

Enter TOM, *meeting* PHILLIS.

Tom. Well, Phillis!———What! with a face as if you had never seen me before?——What a work have I to do now! She has seen some new visitant at their house, whose airs she has catch'd, and is resolv'd to practise them upon me. Numberless are the changes she'll dance through before she'll answer this plain question, *videlicet*, Have you deliver'd my master's letter to your lady? Nay, I know her too well to ask an account of it in an ordinary way; I'll be in my airs as well as she. [*Aside.*]——Well, madam, as unhappy as you are at present pleased to make me, I would not in the general be any other than what I am; I would not be a bit wiser, a bit richer, a bit taller, a bit shorter, than I am at this instant. [*Looking stedfastly at her.*

Phil. Did ever any body doubt, Master Thomas, but that you were extremely satisfied with your sweet self?

Tom. I am, indeed.—The thing I have least reason to be satisfied with is my fortune, and I am glad of my poverty; perhaps, if I were rich, I should overlook the finest woman in the world, that wants nothing but riches to be thought so.

Phil. How prettily was that said? But I'll have a great deal more before I say one word. [*Aside.*

Tom. I should perhaps have been stupidly above her had I not been her equal, and by not being her equal, never had opportunity of being her slave. I am my master's servant for hire, I am my mistress's from choice, would she but approve my passion.

Phil. I think it is the first time I ever heard you speak of it with any sense of anguish, if you really do suffer any.

Tom. Ah, Phillis! can you doubt after what you have seen?

Phil. I know not what I have seen, nor what I have heard; but since I am at leisure, you may tell me when you fell in love with me, how you fell in love with me, and what you have suffer'd, or are ready to suffer for me.

Tom. Oh, the unmerciful jade! when I'm in haste about my master's letter—But I must go through it. [*Aside.*]—Ah! too well I remember when, and how, and on what occasion, I was first surpris'd. It was on the first of April, one thousand seven hundred and fifteen, I came into Mr Sealand's service: I was then a hobble-de-hoy, and you a pretty little tight girl, a favourite handmaid of the housekeeper.——At that time we neither of us knew what was in us. I remember I was ordered to get out of the window, one pair of stairs, to rub the sashes clean—the person employed on the inner side was your charming self, whom I had never seen before.

Phil. I think I remember the silly accident. What made ye, you oaf, ready to fall down into the street?

Tom. You know not, I warrant you—you could not guess what surpris'd me—you took no delight when you immediately grew wanton in your conquest, and put your lips close, and breath'd upon the glass, and when my lips approach'd, a dirty cloth you rubb'd against my face, and hid your beauteous form; when I again drew near, you spit and rubb'd, and smil'd at my undoing.

Phil. What silly thoughts you men have!

Tom. We were Pyramus and Thisbe—but ten times harder was my fate: Pyramus could peep only through a wall; I saw her, saw my Thisbe, in all her beauty, but as much kept from her as if a hundred walls between; for there was more, there was her will against me.—Would she but relent!——Oh, Phillis, Phillis! shorten my torment, and declare you pity me.

Phil. I believe it's very sufferable; the pain is not so exquisite but that you may bear it a little longer.

Tom. Oh, my charming Phillis! if all depended on my fair one's will, I could with glory suffer ———but, dearest creature! consider our miserable state.

Phil. How! miserable!

Tom. We are miserable to be in love, and under the command of others than those we love ——with that generous passion in the heart, to be sent to and fro on errands, call'd, check'd, and rated for the meanest trifles——Oh, Phillis! you don't know how many china cups and glasses my passion for you has made me break: You have broken my fortune as well as my heart.

Phil. Well, Mr Thomas, I cannot but own to you, that I believe your master writes, and you speak, the best of any men in the world. Never was a woman so well pleas'd with a letter as my young lady was with his, and this is an answer to it. [*Gives him a letter.*

Tom. This was well done, my dearest! Consider, we must strike out some pretty livelihood for ourselves by closing their affairs; it will be nothing for them to give us a little being of our own, some small tenement, out of their large possessions: whatever they give us, it will be more than what they keep for themselves; one acre with Phillis would be worth a whole county without her.

Phil. Oh, could I but believe you!

Tom. If not the utterance, believe the touch of my lips. [*Kisses her.*

Phil. There's no contradicting you. How closely you argue, Tom!

Tom. And will closer in due time; but I must hasten with this letter, to hasten towards the possession of you—then, Phillis, consider how I must be reveng'd (look to it!) of all your skittishness, shy looks, and at best but coy compliances.

Phil. O, Tom! you grow wanton and sensual, as my lady calls it; I must not endure it. Oh, foh! you are a man, an odious, filthy, male creature! you should behave, if you had a right sense, or were a man of sense, like Mr Cimberton, with distance and indifference; or, let me see, some other becoming hard word, with seeming in—in—advertency, and not rush on one as if you were seizing a prey. But hush—the ladies are coming—Good Tom, don't kiss me above once, and be gone.—Lard; we have been fooling and toying, and not considered the main business of our masters and mistresses.

Tom. Why, their business is to be fooling and toying as soon as the parchments are ready.

Phil. Well remember'd—Parchments—my lady, to my knowledge, is preparing writings between her coxcomb, cousin Cimberton, and my mistress, though my master has an eye to the parchments already prepar'd between your master, Mr Bevil, and my mistress; and I believe my mistress herself has sign'd and seal'd in her heart to Mr Myrtle—Did I not bid you kiss me but once, and be gone? but I know you won't be satisfy'd.

Tom. No, you smooth creature! how should I? [*Kisses her hand.*

Phil. Well, since you are so humble, or so cool, as to ravish my hand only, I'll take my leave of you like a great lady, and you a man of quality. [*They salute formally.*

Tom. Pox of all this state! [*Offers to kiss her more closely.*

Phil. No, pr'ythee, Tom, mind your business. We must follow that interest which will take, but endeavour at that which will be most for us, and we like most.——Oh, here is my young mistress! [TOM *taps her neck behind, and kisses his fingers.*] Go, ye liquorish fool. [*Exit* TOM.

Enter LUCINDA.

Luc. Who was that you were hurrying away?

Phil. One that I had no mind to part with.

Luc. Why did you turn him away then?

Phil. For your ladyship's service, to carry your ladyship's letter to his master. I could hardly get the rogue away.

Luc. Why, has he so little love for his master?

Phil. No, but he has so much love for his mistress.

Luc. But I thought I heard him kiss you: why do you suffer that?

Phil. Why, madam, we vulgar take it to be a sign of love. We servants, we poor people, that have nothing but our persons to bestow or treat for, are forced to deal and bargain by way of sample; and therefore, as we have no parchments or wax necessary in our agreements, we squeeze with our hands, and seal with our lips, to ratify vows and promises.

Luc. But cann't you trust one another, without such earnest down?

Phil. We don't think it safe, any more than you gentry, to come together without deeds executed.

Luc. Thou are a pert, merry hussy.

Phil. I wish, madam, your lover and you were as happy as Tom and your servant are.

Luc. You grow impertinent.

Phil. I have done, madam; and I won't ask you what you intend to do with Mr Myrtle, what your father will do with Mr Bevil, nor what you all, especially my lady, mean by admitting Mr Cimberton as particularly here as if he were married to you already; nay, you are married actually, as far as people of quality are.

Luc. How's that?

Phil. You have different beds in the same house.

Luc. Pshaw! I have a very great value for Mr Bevil, but have actually put an end to his pretensions, in the letter I gave you for him; but my father, in his heart, still has a mind to him, were it not for this woman they talk of, and I am apt to imagine he is married to her, or never designs to marry at all.

Phil. Then, Mr Myrtle——

Luc. He had my parent's leave to apply to me, and by that he has won me and my affections: who is to have this body of mine, without 'em, it seems is nothing to me: My mother says, 'tis indecent for me to let my thoughts stray about the person of my husband: Nay, she says a maid rightly virtuous, though she may have been where her lover was a thousand times, should not have made observations enough to know him from another man, when she sees him in a third place.

Phil. That's more than the severity of a nun, for not to see when one may is hardly possible,

not to see when one cannot is very easy: at this rate, madam, there are a great many whom you have not seen, who——

Luc. Mamma says, the first time you see your husband should be at that instant he is made so. When your father, with the help of the minister, gives you to him, then you are to see him, then you are to observe and take notice of him, because then you are to obey him.

Phil. But does not my lady remember you are to love as well as to obey?

Luc. To love is a passion, 'tis a desire, and we must have no desires. Oh! I cannot endure the reflection! with what insensibility on my part, with what more than patience, have I been expos'd and offer'd to some awkward booby or other, in every county of Great Britain!

Phil. Indeed, madam, I wonder I never heard you speak of it before with this indignation.

Luc. Every corner of the land has presented me with a wealthy coxcomb: As fast as one treaty has gone off, another has come on, till my name and person has been the tittle-tattle of the whole town.——What is this world come to! no shame left! to be bartered for like the beasts of the field, and that in such an instance as coming together, to an entire familiarity, and union of soul and body, and this without being so much as well-wishers to each other, but for increase of fortune!

Phil. But, madam, all these vexations will end very soon in one for all: Mr Cimberton is your mother's kinsman, and three hundred years an older gentleman than any lover you ever had; for which reason, with that of his prodigious large estate, she is resolved on him, and has sent to consult the lawyers accordingly; nay, has, whether you know it or no, been in treaty with Sir Geoffry, who, to join in the settlement, has accepted of a sum to do it, and is every moment expected in town for that purpose.

Luc. How do you get all this intelligence?

Phil. By an art I have, I thank my stars, beyond all the waiting-maids in Great Britain; the art of list'ning, madam, for your ladyship's service.

Luc. I shall soon know as much as you do. Leave me, leave me, Phillis; be gone. Here, here, I'll turn you out. My mother says I must not converse with my servants, though I must converse with no one else. [*Exit* PHIL.] How unhappy are we who are born to great fortunes! No one looks at us with indifference, or acts towards us on the foot of plain dealing, yet by all I have been heretofore offered to, or treated for, I have been us'd with the most agreeable of all abuses, flattery; but now, by this phlegmatic fool, I am us'd as nothing, or a mere thing: He, forsooth, is too wise, too learned to have any regard to desires, and I know not what the learned oaf calls sentiments of love and passion!——Here he comes, with my mother—It's much if he looks at me, or if he does, takes no more notice of me than of any other moveable in the room.

Enter Mrs SEALAND *and Mr* CIMBERTON.

Mrs Seal. How do I admire this noble, this learned taste of yours, and the worthy regard you have to our own ancient and honourable house, in consulting a means to keep the blood as pure and as regularly descended as may be!

Cimb. Why, really, madam, the young women of this age are treated with discourses of such a tendency, and their imaginations so bewilder'd in flesh and blood, that a man of reason cann't talk to be understood: they have no ideas of happiness but what are more gross than the gratification of hunger and thirst.

Luc. With how much reflection he is a coxcomb! [*Aside.*

Cimb. And in truth, madam, I have consider'd it as a most brutal custom, that persons of the first character in the world should go as ordinarily, and with as little shame, to bed as to dinner with one another. They proceed to the propagation of the species as openly as to the preservation of the individual.

Luc. She that willingly goes to bed to thee must have no shame, I'm sure. [*Aside.*

Mrs Seal. Oh, cousin Cimberton! cousin Cimberton! how abstracted, how refined is your sense of things! but indeed it is too true, there is nothing so ordinary as to say, in the best governed families, my master and lady are gone to bed—one does not know but it might have been said of one's self.

[*Hiding her face with her fan.*

Cimb. Lycurgus, madam, instituted otherwise: among the Lacedemonians, the whole female world was pregnant, but none but the mothers themselves knew by whom; their meetings were secret, and the amorous congress always by stealth; and no such professed doings between the sexes as are tolerated among us under the audacious word marriage.

Mrs Seal. Oh! had I liv'd in those days, and been a matron of Sparta, one might, with less indecency, have had ten children according to that modest institution, than one under the confusion of our modern barefac'd manners.

Luc. And yet, poor woman! she has gone through the whole ceremony, and here I stand a melancholy proof of it. [*Aside.*

Mrs Seal. We will talk then of business. That girl, walking about the room there, is to be your wife: she has, I confess, no ideas, no sentiments, that speak her born of a thinking mother.

Cimb. I have observ'd her; her lively look, free air, and disengaged countenance, speaks her very—

Luc. Very what?

Cimb. If you please, madam—to set her a little that way.

Mrs Seal. Lucinda, say nothing to him, you are not match for him: when you are married, you may speak to such a husband when you're spoken to; but I am disposing of you above yourself every way.

Cimb. Madam, you cannot but observe the inconveniencies I expose myself to, in hopes that your ladyship will be the consort of my better part. As for the young woman, she is rather an impediment than a help to a man of letters and speculation. Madam, there is no reflection, no philosophy, can at all times subdue the sensitive life, but the animal shall sometimes carry away the man——Ha! ay, the vermillion of her lips!

Luc. Pray don't talk of me thus.

Cimb. The pretty enough—pant of her bosom!

Luc. Sir! madam, don't you hear him?

Cimb. Her forward chest!

Luc. Intolerable!

Cimb. High health!

Luc. The grave, easy, impudence of him!

Cimb. Proud heart!

Luc. Stupid coxcomb!

Cimb. I say, madam, her impatience, while we are looking at her, throws out all attractions—her arms—her neck—what a spring in her step!

Luc. Don't you run me over thus, you strange unaccountable——

Cimb. What an elasticity in her veins and arteries!

Luc. I have no veins, no arteries!

Mrs Seal. Oh, child! hear him; he talks finely; he's a scholar; he knows what you have.

Cimb. The speaking invitation of her shape, the gathering of herself up, and the indignation you see in the pretty little thing!—Now I am considering her on this occasion but as one that is to be pregnant——

Luc. The familiar, learned, unseasonable puppy! [*Aside.*

Cimb. And pregnant undoubtedly she will be yearly: I fear I sha'n't, for many years, have discretion enough to give her one fallow season.

Luc. Monster! there's no bearing it. The hideous sot!—There's no enduring it, to be thus surveyed like a steed at sale!

Cimb. At sale!—she's very illiterate; but she's very well limb'd too. Turn her in, I see what she is.

Mrs Seal. Go, you creature! I am asham'd of you. [*Exit* LUCINDA *in a rage.*

Cimb. No harm done.—You know, madam, the better sort of people, as I observ'd to you, treat by their lawyers of weddings, [*Adjusting himself at the glass*] and the woman in the bargain, like the mansion-house in the sale of the estate, is thrown in, and what that is, whether good or bad, is not at all consider'd.

Mrs Seal. I grant it, and therefore make no demand for her youth and beauty, and every other accomplishment, as the common world think 'em, because she is not polite.

Cimb. I know your exalted understanding, abstracted as it is from vulgar prejudice, will not be offended when I declare to you, madam, I marry to have an heir to my estate, and not to beget a colony or a plantation. This young woman's beauty and constitution will demand provision for a tenth child at least.

Mrs Seal. With all that wit and learning, how considerate! what an economist! [*Aside.*] Sir, I cannot make her any other than what she is, or say she is much better than the other young women of this age, or fit for much besides being a mother; but I have given directions for the marriage settlements, and Sir Geoffry Cimberton's counsel is to meet ours here at this hour concerning his joining in the deed, which, when executed, makes you capable of settling what is due to Lucinda's fortune. Herself, as I told you, I say nothing of.

Cimb. No, no, no; indeed, madam, it is not usual, and I must depend upon my own reflection and philosophy not to overstock my family.

Mrs Seal. I cannot help her, cousin Cimberton, but she is, for aught I see, as well as the daughter of any body else.

Cimb. That is very true, madam.

Enter a Servant, who whispers Mrs SEALAND.

Mrs Seal. The lawyers are come, and now we are to hear what they have resolved as to the point, whether it is necessary that Sir Geoffry should join in the settlement, as being what they call in the remainder. But, good cousin, you must have patience with 'em. These lawyers, I am told, are of a different kind; one is what they call a chamber-counsel, the other a pleader: the conveyancer is slow, from an imperfection in his speech, and therefore shunn'd the bar, but extremely passionate and impatient of contradiction: the other is as warm as he, but has a tongue so voluble, and a head so conceited, he will suffer nobody to speak but himself.

Cimb. You mean old Serjeant Target and Counsellor Bramble: I have heard of 'em.

Mrs Seal. The same: shew in the gentlemen. [*Exit Servant.*

Re-enter Servant, introducing MYRTLE *and* TOM, *disguis'd as* BRAMBLE *and* TARGET.

Mrs Seal. Gentlemen, this is the party concern'd, Mr Cimberton; and I hope you have consider'd of the matter.

Targ. Yes, madam, we have agreed that it must be by indent—dent—dent—dent—

Bramb. Yes, madam, Mr Serjeant and myself have agreed, as he is pleased to inform you, that it must be an indenture tripartite, and tripartite let it be, for Sir Geoffry must needs be a party. Old Cimberton, in the year 1619, says, in that ancient roll in Mr Serjeant's hands, as recourse thereto being had will more at large appear——

Targ. Yes, and by the deeds in your hands it appears that———

Bramb. Mr Serjeant, I beg of you to make no inferences upon what is in our custody, but speak to the titles in your own deeds. I shall not shew that deed till my client is in town.

Cimb. You know best your own methods.

Mrs Seal. The single question is, Whether the entail is such, that my cousin, Sir Geoffry, is necessary in this affair?

Bramb. Yes, as to the lordship of Tretriplet, but not as to the messuage of Grimgribber.

Targ. I say that Gr—, Gr—, that Gr—, Gr—, Grimgribber, Grimgribber is in us; that is to say, the remainder thereof, as well as that of Tr—, Tr—, Triplet.

Bramb. You go upon the deed of Sir Ralph, made in the middle of the last century, precedent to that in which old Cimberton made over the remainder, and made it pass to the heirs-general, by which your client comes in; and I question whether the remainder even of Tretriplet is in him——but we are willing to wave that, and give him a valuable consideration. But we shall not purchase what is in us for ever, as Grimgribber is, at the rate, as we guard against the contingent of Mr Cimberton having no son.—Then we know Sir Geoffry is the first of the collateral male line in this family——yet———

Targ. Sir, Gr—, Gr—ber is—

Bramb. I apprehend you very well, and your argument might be of force, and we would be inclined to hear that in all its parts—but, sir, I see very plainly what you are going into—I tell you it is as probable a contingent that Sir Geoffry may die before Mr Cimberton as that he may outlive him.

Targ. Sir, we are not ripe for that yet, but I must say—

Bramb. Sir, I allow you the whole extent of that argument, but that will go no farther than as to the claimants under old Cimberton.—I am of opinion that, according to the instructions of Sir Ralph, he could not dock the entail, and then create a new estate for the heirs in general.

Targ. Sir, I have no patience to be told, that when Gr—, Gr—ber———

Bramb. I will allow it you, Mr Serjeant; but there must be the words *heirs for ever* to make such an estate as you pretend.

Cimb. I must be impartial, though you are counsel for my side of the question.——Were it not that you are so good as to allow him what he has not said, I should think it very hard you should answer him without hearing him.——But, gentlemen, I believe you have both considered this matter, and are firm in your different opinions; 'twere better therefore you proceed according to the particular sense of each of you, and give your thoughts distinctly in writing—And, do you see, sirs, pray let me have a copy of what you say in English.

Bramb. Why, what is all we have been saying?—In English! Oh! but I forgot myself; you're a wit.—But, however, to please you, sir, you shall have it in as plain terms as the law will admit of.

Cimb. But I will have it, sir, without delay.

Bramb. That, sir, the law will not admit of; the courts are sitting at Westminster, and I am this moment oblig'd to be at every one of them, and 'twould be wrong if I should not be in the Hall to attend one of 'em at least; the rest would take it ill else:—therefore I must leave what I have said to Mr Serjeant's consideration, and I will digest his arguments on my part, and you shall hear from me again, sir. [*Exit* BRAMBLE.

Targ. Agreed, agreed.

Cimb. Mr Bramble is very quick—he parted a little abruptly.

Targ. He could not bear my argument:—I pinched him to the quick about that Gr—, Gr—ber.

Mrs Seal. I saw that, for he durst not so much as hear you.——I shall send to you, Mr Serjeant, as soon as Sir Geoffry comes to town, and then I hope all may be adjusted.

Targ. I shall be at my chambers at my usual hours. [*Exit.*

Cimb. Madam, if you please, I'll now attend you to the tea-table, where I shall hear from your ladyship reason and good sense, after all this law and gibberish.

Mrs Seal. 'Tis a wonderful thing, sir, that men of their profession do not study to talk the substance of what they have to say in the language of the rest of the world; sure they'd find their account in it.

Cimb. They might perhaps, madam, with people of your good sense, but with the generality 'twould never do: the vulgar would have no respect for truth and knowledge if they were expos'd to naked view.

Truth is so simple of all art bereav'd,
Since the world will—why let it be deceived.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—BEVIL *Junior's Lodgings.*

BEVIL, *Jun. with a letter in his hand, followed by* TOM.

Tom. Upon my life, sir, I know nothing of the matter: I never open'd my lips to Mr Myrtle about any thing of your honour's letter to Madam Lucinda.

B. jun. What's the fool in such a fright for? I don't suppose you did; what I would know is, whether Mr Myrtle shew'd any suspicion, or ask'd you any questions, to lead you to say casually that you had carried any such letter for me this morning?

Tom. Why, sir, if he did ask me any questions, how could I help it?

B. jun. I don't say you could, oaf! I am not questioning you but him. What did he say to you?

Tom. Why, sir, when I came to his chambers to be dress'd for the lawyer's part your honour was pleased to put me upon, he ask'd me if I had been to Mr Sealand's this morning?——So I told, sir, I often went thither——because, sir, if I had not said that, he might have thought there was something more in my going now than at another time.

B. jun. Very well.—The fellow's caution I find has given him this jealousy. [*Aside.*] Did he ask you no other questions?

Tom. Yes, sir—now I remember, as we came away in the hackney-coach from Mr Sealand's, Tom, says he, as I came into your master's this morning he bade you go for an answer to a letter he had sent; pray did you bring him any? says he——Ah! says I, sir, your honour is pleased to joke with me; you have a mind to know whether I can keep a secret or no.

B jun. And so, by shewing him you could, you told him you had one.

Tom. Sir——— [*Confusedly.*

B. jun. What mean actions does jealousy make a man stoop to! how poorly has he us'd art with a servant to make him betray his master!—Well, and when did he give you this letter for me?

Tom. Sir, he writ it before he pull'd off his lawyer's gown at his own chambers.

B. jun. Very well, and what did he say when you brought him my answer to it?

Tom. He look'd a little out of humour, sir, and said it was very well.

B. jun. I knew he would be grave upon't——Wait without.

Tom. Hum! 'gad I don't like this: I am afraid we are in the wrong box here———

[*Exit* TOM.

B. jun. I put on a serenity while my fellow was present, but I have never been more thoroughly disturb'd. This hot man, to write me a challenge on supposed artificial dealing, when I profess'd myself his friend!—I can live contented without glory, but I cannot suffer shame. What's to be done? But first, let me consider Lucinda's letter again. [*Reads.*

'Sir, I hope it is consistent with the laws a woman ought to impose upon herself, to acknowledge that your manner of declining a treaty of marriage in our family, and desiring the refusal may come from me, has something more engaging in it than the courtship of him who I fear will fall to my lot, except your friend exerts himself for our common safety and happiness. I have reasons for desiring Mr Myrtle may not know of this letter till hereafter, and am your most obliged servant,

LUCINDA SEALAND.'

Well, but the postscript. [*Reads.*

'I won't, upon second thoughts, hide any thing from you: but my reason for concealing this is, that Mr Myrtle has a jealousy in his temper which gives me some terrors; but my esteem for him inclines me to hope that only an ill effect which sometimes accompanies a tender love, and what may be cured by a careful and unblameable conduct.'

Thus has this lady made me her friend and confidant, and put herself in a kind under my protection. I cannot tell him immediately the purport of this letter, except I could cure him of the violent and untractable passion of jealousy, and so serve him and her, by disobeying her in the article of secrecy, more than I should by complying with her directions. But then this duelling, which custom has imposed upon every man who would live with reputation and honour in the world, how must I preserve myself from imputations there? He'll, forsooth, call it, or think it, fear, if I explain without fighting—But his letter—I'll read it again———

'Sir, you have us'd me basely, in corresponding and carrying on a treaty where you told me you were indifferent. I have changed my sword since I saw you, which advertisement I thought proper to send you against the next meeting between you and the injur'd

CHARLES MYRTLE.'

Enter TOM.

Tom. Mr Myrtle, sir: would your honour please to see him?

B. jun Why, you stupid creature, let Mr Myrtle wait at my lodgings! Shew him up. [*Exit* TOM.] Well, I am resolved upon my carriage to him——he is in love, and in every circumstance of life a little distrustful, which I must allow for.—But here he is.

Enter TOM, *introducing* MYRTLE.

Sir, I am extremely obliged to you for this honour——But, sir, you with your very discerning face, leave the room. [*Exit* TOM.] Well, Mr Myrtle, your commands with me?

Myrt. The time, the place, our long acquaintance, and many other circumstances which affect me on this occasion, oblige me, without farther ceremony or conference, to desire you would not only, as you already have, acknowledge the receipt of my letter, but also comply with the request in it. I must have farther notice taken of my message than these half lines—I have yours—I shall be at home———

B. jun. Sir, I own I have received a letter from you in a very unusual style, but as I design every thing in this matter shall be your own action, your own seeking, I shall understand nothing but what you are pleas'd to confirm face to face; and I have already forgot the contents of your epistle.

Myrt. This cool manner is very agreeable to the abuse you have already made of my simplicity and frankness, and I see your moderation tends to your own advantage and not mine, to your own safety, not consideration of your friend.

B. jun. My own safety, Mr Myrtle?

Myrt. Your own safety, Mr Bevil.

B. jun. Look you, Mr Myrtle, there's no disguising that I understand what you would be at: but, sir, you know I have often dared to disapprove of the decisions a tyrant custom has introduced, to the breach of all laws, both divine and human.

Myrt. Mr Bevil, Mr Bevil! it would be a good first principle, in those who have so tender a conscience that way, to have as much abhorrence of doing injuries as——

B. jun. As what?

Myrt. As fear of answering for 'em.

B. jun. As fear of answering for 'em! but that apprehension is just or blameable, according to the object of that fear.——I have often told you in confidence of heart, I abhorred the daring to offend the Author of life, and rushing into his presence. I say, by the very same act, to commit the crime against him, and immediately to urge on to his tribunal.

Myrt. Mr Bevil, I must tell you this coolness, this gravity, this shew of conscience, shall never cheat me of my mistress. You have indeed the best excuse for life, the hopes of possessing Lucinda; but consider, sir, I have as much reason to be weary of it if I am to lose her, and my first attempt to recover her shall be, to let her see the dauntless man who is to be her guardian and protector.

B. jun. Sir, shew me but the least glimpse of argument, that I am authorised, by my own hand, to vindicate any lawless insult of this nature, and I will shew thee, to chastise thee hardly deserves the name of courage. Slight inconsiderate man! There is, Mr Myrtle, no such terror in quick anger; and you shall, you know not why, be cool, as you have, you know not why, been warm.

Myrt. Is the woman one loves so little an occasion of anger? You, perhaps, who know not what it is to love, who have your ready, your commodious, your foreign trinket, for your loose hours, and from your fortune, your specious outward carriage, and other lucky circumstances, as easy a way to the possession of a woman of honour, you know nothing of what it is to be alarmed, to be distracted with anxiety and terror of losing more than life. Your marriage, happy man! goes on like common business, and, in the interim, you have your rambling captive, your Indian princess, for your soft moments of dalliance, your convenient, your ready, Indiana.

B. jun. You have touch'd me beyond the patience of a man! and I'm excusable in the guard of innocence, or from the infirmity of human nature, which can bear no more, to accept your invitation, and observe your letter.——Sir, I'll attend you.

Enter TOM.

Tom. Did you call, sir? I thought you did; I heard you speak loud.

B. jun. Yes; go, call a coach.

Tom. Sir—Master—Mr Myrtle—Friends—Gentlemen—what d'ye mean? I'm but a servant, or—

B. jun. Call a coach. [*Exit* TOM.

[*A long pause, walking sullenly by each other.* [*Aside.*] Shall I, though provoked to the uttermost, recover myself at the entrance of a third person, and that my servant too, and not have respect enough to all I have ever been receiving from infancy, the obligation to the best of fathers, to an unhappy virgin too, whose life depends on mine? [*Shutting the door.* [*To* MYRTLE.] I have, thank Heaven, had time to recollect myself, and shall not, for fear of what such a rash man as you think of me, keep longer unexplained the false appearances under which your infirmity of temper makes you suffer, when perhaps too much regard to a false point of honour makes me prolong that suffering.

Myrt. I am sure Mr Bevil cannot doubt but I had rather have satisfaction from his innocence than his sword.

B. jun. Why, then, would you ask it first that way?

Myrt. Consider, you kept your temper yourself no longer than till I spoke to the disadvantage of her you loved.

B. jun. True. But, let me tell you, I have saved you from the most exquisite distress; even though you had succeeded in the dispute. I know you so well, that, I am sure, to have found this letter about a man you had killed, would have been worse than death to yourself.—Read it.—When he is thoroughly mortified, and shame has got the better of jealousy, he will deserve to be assisted towards obtaining Lucinda. [*Aside.*

Myrt. With what a superiority has he turn'd the injury upon me as the aggressor! I begin to fear I have been too far transported—'A treaty in our family!' is not that saying too much? I shall relapse——But I find (on the postscript) 'something like jealousy'—With what face can I see my benefactor, my advocate, whom I have treated like a betrayer?——Oh, Bevil! with what words shall I——

B. jun. There needs none; to convince is much more than to conquer.

Myrt. But can you——

B. jun. You have o'erpaid the inquietude you gave me in the change I see in you towards me. Alas! what machines are we! Thy face is alter'd to that of another man; to that of my companion, my friend.

Myrt. That I could be such a precipitate wretch!

B. jun. Pray, no more.

Myrt. Let me reflect how many friends have died by the hands of friends for want of temper; and you must give me leave to say, again and again, how much I am beholden to that superior spirit you have subdued me with.—What had become of one of us, or perhaps both, had you been as weak as I was, and as incapable of reason?

B. jun. I congratulate to us both the escape from ourselves, and hope the memory of it will make us dearer friends than ever.

Myrt. Dear Bevil! your friendly conduct has convinced me that there is nothing manly but what is conducted by reason, and agreeable to the practice of virtue and justice; and yet how many have been sacrificed to that idol, the unreasonable opinion of men! Nay, they are so ridiculous in it that they often use their swords against each other with dissembled anger and real fear.

Betray'd by honour, and compell'd by shame,
They hazard being to preserve a name;
Nor dare inquire into the dread mistake,
Till plung'd in sad eternity they wake.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*St James's Park.*

Enter Sir JOHN BEVIL *and Mr* SEALAND.

Sir J. B. Give me leave, however, Mr Sealand, as we are upon a treaty for uniting our families, to mention only the business of an ancient house.—Genealogy and descent are to be of some consideration in an affair of this sort——

Mr Seal. Genealogy and descent!—Sir, there has been in our family a very large one. There was Gulfrid, the father of Edward, the father of Ptolemy, the father of Crassus, the father of Earl Richard, the father of Henry the Marquis, the father of Duke John——

Sir J. B. What! do you rave, Mr Sealand? All these great names in your family?

Mr Seal. These! yes, sir—I have heard my father name them all, and more.

Sir J B. Ay, sir!—and did he say they were all in your family?

Mr Seal. Yes, sir, he kept them all—he was the greatest cocker in England—He said Duke John won many battles, but never lost him one.

Sir J. B. Oh, sir, your servant! you are laughing at my laying any stress upon descent.—But I must tell you, sir, I never knew any one, but he that wanted that advantage, turn it into ridicule.

Mr Seal. And I never knew any who had many better advantages, put that into his account. But, Sir John, value yourself as you please upon your ancient house; I am to talk freely of every thing you are pleased to put into your bill of rates on this occasion.—Yet, sir, I have made no objections to your son's family—it is his morals that I doubt.

Sir. J. B. Sir, I cann't help saying, that what might injure a citizen's credit, may be no stain to a gentleman's honour.

Mr Seal. Sir John, the honour of a gentleman is liable to be tainted by as small a matter as the credit of a trader: we are talking of a marriage, and, in such a case, the father of a young woman will not think it an addition to the honour or credit of her lover—that he is a keeper.

Sir J. B. Mr Sealand, don't take upon you to spoil my son's marriage with any woman else.

Mr Seal. Sir John, let him apply to any woman else, and have as many mistresses as he pleases.——

Sir J. B. My son, sir, is a discreet and sober gentleman.

Mr Seal. Sir, I never saw a man that wench'd soberly and discreetly that ever left it off—the decency observ'd in the practice hides, from the sinner, even the iniquity of it: they pursue it, not that their appetites hurry 'em away, but, I warrant you, because 'tis their opinion they may do it.

Sir J. B. Were what you suspect a truth—do you design to keep your daughter a virgin till you find a man unblemish'd that way?

Mr Seal. Sir, as much a cit as you take me for—I know the town and the world—and give me leave to say, that we merchants are a species of gentry that have grown into the world this last century, and are as honourable, and almost as useful, as you landed folks, that have always thought yourselves so much above us; for your trading, forsooth! is extended no farther than a load of hay or a fat ox—You are pleasant people indeed! because you are generally bred up to be lazy, therefore warrant you industry is dishonourable.

Sir J. B. Be not offended, sir; let us go back to our point.

Mr Seal. Oh! not at all offended—but I don't love to leave any part of the account unclos'd—Look you, Sir John, comparisons are odious, and more particularly so on occasions of this kind, when we are projecting races that are to be made out of both sides of the comparisons.

Sir J. B. But my son, sir, is in the eye of the world a gentleman of merit.

Mr Seal. I own to you I think him so—But, Sir John, I am a man exercised and experienced in chances and disasters; I lost in my earlier years a very fine wife, and with her a poor little infant: this makes me perhaps over-cautious to preserve the second bounty of Providence to me, and be as careful as I can of this child.—You'll pardon me; my poor girl, sir, is as valuable to me as your boasted son to you.

Sir J. B. Why, that's one very good reason, Mr Sealand, why I wish my son had her.

Mr Seal. There is nothing but this strange lady here, this incognita, that can be objected to him.—Here and there a man falls in love with an artful creature, and gives up all the motives of life to that one passion.

Sir J. B. A man of my son's understanding cannot be supposed to be one of them.

Mr Seal. Very wise men have been so enslaved; and when a man marries with one of them upon his hands, whether moved from the demand of the world, or slighter reasons, such a husband soils with his wife for a month perhaps—then good b'w'ye, madam—the show's over—Ah! John Dryden points out such a husband to a hair, where he says,

And while abroad so prodigal the dolt is,
Poor spouse at home as ragged as a colt is.

Now, in plain terms, sir, I shall not care to have my poor girl turned a-grazing, and that must be the case when—

Sir J. B. But, pray, consider, sir, my son——

Mr Seal. Look you, sir, I'll make the matter short. This unknown lady, as I told you, is all the objection I have to him: but one way or other he is or has been certainly engaged to her—I am therefore resolved this very afternoon to visit her: now, from her behaviour or appearance I shall soon be let into what I may fear or hope for.

Sir J. B. Sir, I am very confident there can be nothing enquired into relating to my son that will not, upon being understood, turn to his advantage.

Mr Seal. I hope that as sincerely as you believe it—Sir John Bevil, when I am satisfied in this great point, if your son's conduct answers the character you give him, I shall wish your alliance more than that of any gentleman in Great Britain, and so your servant. [*Exit.*

Sir J. B. He is gone in a way but barely civil; but his great wealth, and the merit of his only child, the heiress of it, are not to be lost for a little peevishness——

Enter HUMPHREY.

Oh! Humphrey, you are come in a seasonable minute; I want to talk to thee, and to tell thee, that my head and heart are on the rack about my son.

Humph. Sir, you may trust his discretion, I am sure you may.

Sir J. B. Why, I do believe I may, and yet I'm in a thousand fears when I lay this vast wealth before me. When I consider his prepossessions, either generous to a folly in an honourable love, or abandoned past redemption in a vicious one, and, from the one or the other, his insensibility to the fairest prospect towards doubling our estate, a father who knows how useful wealth is, and how necessary even to those who despise it, I say a father, Humphrey, a father, cannot bear it.

Humph. Be not transported, sir; you will grow incapable of taking any resolution in your perplexity.

Sir J. B. Yes, as angry as I am with him, I would not have him surprised in any thing.—This mercantile rough man may go grossly into the examination of this matter, and talk to the gentlewoman so as to——

Humph. No, I hope not in an abrupt manner.

Sir J. B. No, I hope not! Why, dost thou know any thing of her, or of him, or of any thing of it, or all of it?

Humph. My dear master! I know so much, that I told him this very day, you had reason to be secretly out of humour about her.

Sir J. B. Did you go so far? Well, what said he to that?

Humph. His words were, looking upon me stedfastly, Humphrey, says he, that woman is a woman of honour.

Sir J. B. How! do you think he is married to her, or designs to marry her?

Humph. I can say nothing to the latter—but he says he can marry no one without your consent, while you are living.

Sir J. B. If he said so much, I know he scorns to break his word with me.

Humph. I am sure of that.

Sir J. B. You are sure of that!—Well, that's some comfort—then I have nothing to do but to see the bottom of this matter during this present ruffle.—Oh, Humphrey—

Humph. You are not ill, I hope, sir.

Sir J. B Yes, a man is very ill that is in a very ill humour. To be a father, is to be in care for one whom you oftener disoblige than please by that very care.—Oh, that sons could know the duty to a father before they themselves are fathers!—But, perhaps, you'll say now, that I am one of the happiest fathers in the world; but, I assure you, that of the very happiest is not a condition to be envied.

Humph. Sir, your pain arises not from the thing itself, but your particular sense of it.—— You are over-fond, nay, give me leave to say, you are unjustly apprehensive from your fondness. My master Bevil never disobliged you, and he will, I know he will, do every thing you ought to expect.

Sir J. B. He won't take all this money with this girl—For aught I know, he will, forsooth, have so much moderation, as to think he ought not to force his liking for any consideration.

Humph. He is to marry her, not you; he is to live with her, and not you, sir.

Sir J. B. I know not what to think; but I know nothing can be more miserable than to be in this doubt—Follow me; I must come to some resolution. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—BEVIL *Junior's Lodgings.*

Enter TOM *and* PHILLIS.

Tom. Well, madam, if you must speak with Mr Myrtle, you shall; he is now with my master in the library.

Phil. But you must leave me alone with him, for he cann't make me a present, nor I so handsomely take any thing from him before you; it would not be decent.

Tom. It will be very decent, indeed, for me to retire, and leave my mistress with another man.

Phil. He is a gentleman, and will treat one properly.

Tom. I believe so—but, however, I won't be far off, and therefore will venture to trust you. I'll call him to you. [*Exit* TOM.

Phil. What a deal of pother and sputter here is between my mistress and Mr Myrtle from mere punctilio! I could, any hour of the day, get her to her lover, and would do it—but she, forsooth, will allow no plot to get him, but if he can come to her, I know she would be glad of it; I must therefore do her an acceptable violence, and surprise her into his arms. I am sure I go by the best rule imaginable: if she were my maid, I should think her the best servant in the world for doing so by me.

Enter MYRTLE *and* TOM.

Oh, sir! you and Mr Bevil are fine gentlemen, to let a lady remain under such difficulties as my poor mistress, and not attempt to set her at liberty, or release her from the danger of being instantly married to Cimberton.

Myrt. Tom has been telling——But what is to be done?

Phil. What is to be done!——when a man cann't come at his mistress—why, cann't you fire our house, or the next house to us, to make us run out, and you take us?

Myrt. How, Mrs Phillis——

Phil. Ay——let me see that rogue deny to fire a house, make a riot, or any other little thing, when there was no other way to come at me.

Tom. I am obliged to you, madam.

Phil. Why, don't we hear every day of people's hanging themselves for love, and won't they venture the hazard of being hanged for love?—Oh! were I a man——

Myrt. What manly thing would you have me undertake, according to your ladyship's notion of a man?

Phil. Only be at once what one time or other you may be, and wish to be, and must be.

Myrt. Dear girl! talk plainly to me, and consider I, in my condition, cann't be in very good humour—You say, to be at once what I must be.

Phil. Ay, ay——I mean no more than to be an old man; I saw you do it very well at the masquerade. In a word, old Sir Geoffry Cimberton is every hour expected in town, to join in the deeds and settlements for marrying Mr Cimberton——He is half blind, half lame, half deaf, half dumb; though, as to his passions and desires, he is as warm and ridiculous as when in the heat of youth.

Tom. Come, to the business, and don't keep the gentleman in suspense for the pleasure of being courted, as you serve me.

Phil. I saw you at the masquerade act such a one to perfection: go, and put on that very habit, and come to our house as Sir Geoffry: there is not one there but myself knows his person; I was born in the parish where he is lord of the manor; I have seen him often and often at church in the country. Do not hesitate, but come thither; they will think you bring a certain security against Mr Myrtle, and you bring Mr Myrtle. Leave the rest to me! I leave this with you, and expect——They don't, I told you, know you; they think you out of town, which you had as good be for ever, if you lose this opportunity.——I must be gone; I know I am wanted at home.

Myrt. My dear Phillis!

[*Catches and kisses her, and gives her money.*

Phil. Oh fie! My kisses are not my own; you have committed violence; but I'll carry 'em to the right owner. [TOM *kisses her.*] Come, see me down stairs, [*To* TOM] and leave the lover to think of his last game for the prize.

[*Exeunt* TOM *and* PHILLIS.

Myrt. I think I will instantly attempt this wild expedient——the extravagance of it will make me less suspected, and it will give me opportunity to assert my own right to Lucinda, without whom I cannot live. But I am so mortified at this conduct of mine towards poor Bevil! he must think meanly of me.——I know not how to reassume myself, and be in spirit enough for such an adventure as this———yet I must attempt it, if it be only to be near Lucinda under her present perplexities; and sure——

The next delight to transport with the fair,
Is to relieve her in her hours of care.

[*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—SEALAND'S *House.*

Enter PHILLIS, *with lights before* MYRTLE, *disguised like old Sir* GEOFFRY, *supported by Mrs* SEALAND, LUCINDA, *and* CIMBERTON.

Mrs Seal. Now I have seen you thus far, Sir Geoffry, will you excuse me a moment, while I give my necessary orders for your accommodation? [*Exit Mrs* SEALAND.

Myrt. I have not seen you, cousin Cimberton, since you were ten years old; and as it is incumbent on you to keep up your name and family, I shall, upon very reasonable terms, join with you in a settlement to that purpose, though I must tell you, cousin, this is the first merchant that has married into our house.

Luc. Deuce on 'em! am I merchant because my father is? [*Aside.*

Myrt. But is he directly a trader at this time?

Cimb. There is no hiding the disgrace, sir; he trades to all parts of the world.

Myrt. We never had one of our family before who descended from persons that did any thing.

Cimb. Sir, since it is a girl that they have, I am, for the honour of my family, willing to take it in again, and to sink it into our name, and no harm done.

Myrt. 'Tis prudently and generously resolved——Is this the young thing?

Cimb. Yes, sir.

Phil. Good madam! don't be out of humour, but let them run to the utmost of their extravagance——Hear them out.

Myrt. Cann't I see her nearer? my eyes are but weak.

Phil. Beside, I am sure the uncle has something worth your notice. I'll take care to get off the young one, and leave you to observe what may be wrought out of the old one for your good.

[*Exit.*

Cimb. Madam, this old gentleman, your great uncle, desires to be introduced to you, and to see you nearer——Approach, sir.

Myrt. By your leave, young lady—[*Puts on spectacles.*]—Cousin Cimberton, she has exactly that sort of neck and bosom for which my sister Gertrude was so much admired in the year sixty-one, before the French dresses first discovered any thing in women below the chin.

Luc. What a very odd situation I am in! though I cannot but be diverted at the extravagance of their humours, equally unsuitable to their age.—Chin, quoth-a!——I don't believe my passionate lover there knows whether I have one or not. Ha! ha!

Cimb. Madam, I would not willingly offend, but I have a better glass——

[*Pulls out a large one.*

Enter PHILLIS *to* CIMBERTON.

Phil. Sir, my lady desires to shew the apartment to you that she intends for Sir Geoffry.

Cimb. Well, sir, by that time you have sufficiently gazed and sunned yourself in the beauties of my spouse there, I will wait on you again.

[*Exeunt* CIM. *and* PHIL.

Myrt. Were it not, madam, that I might be troublesome, there is something of importance, though we are alone, which I would say more safe from being heard.

Luc. There is something in this old fellow, methinks, that raises my curiosity.

Myrt. To be free, madam, I as heartily contemn this kinsman of mine as you do, and am sorry to see so much beauty and merit devoted by your parents to so insensible a possessor.

Luc. Surprising!—I hope then, sir, you will not contribute to the wrong you are so generous to pity, whatever may be the interest of your family.

Myrt. This hand of mine shall never be employ'd to sign any thing against your good and happiness.

Luc. I am sorry, sir, it is not in my power to make you proper acknowledgment, but there is a gentleman in the world whose gratitude will, I'm sure, be worthy of the favour.

Myrt. All the thanks I desire, madam, are in your power to give.

Luc. Name them, and command them.

Myrt. Only, madam, that the first time you are alone with your lover you will with open arms receive him.

Luc. As willingly as heart could wish it.

Myrt. Thus then he claims your promise. Oh, Lucinda!

Luc. Oh, a cheat, a cheat!

Myrt. Hush! 'tis I, 'tis I, your lover; Myrtle himself, madam.

Luc. Oh, bless me! what rashness an folly to surprise me so!——But hush—my mother—

Enter Mrs SEALAND, CIMBERTON, *and* PHILLIS.

Mrs Seal. How now! what is the matter?

Luc. Oh, madam! as soon as you left the room my uncle fell into a sudden fit, and—and—so I cry'd out for help to support him, and conduct him to his chamber.

Mrs Seal. That was kindly done. Alas, sir! how do you find yourself?

Myrt. Never was taken in so odd a way in my life——Pray lead me—Oh, I was talking here—Pray carry me—to my cousin Cimberton's young lady.

Mrs Seal. [*Aside.*] My cousin Cimberton's young lady! How zealous he is, even in his extremity, for the match! A right Cimberton!

[CIMBERTON *and* LUCINDA *lead him as one in pain.*

Cimb. Pox, uncle, you will pull my ear off!

Luc. Pray, uncle, you will squeeze me to death!

Mrs Seal. No matter, no matter—he knows not what he does. Come, sir, shall I help you out?

Myrt. By no means; I'll trouble nobody but my young cousins here.

[CIM. *and* LUC. *lead him off.*

Phil. But pray, madam, does your ladyship intend that Mr Cimberton shall really marry my young mistress at last? I don't think he likes her.

Mrs Seal. That's not material; men of his speculation are above desires.—But be it as it may, now I have given old Sir Geoffry the trouble of coming up to sign and seal, with what countenance can I be off?

Phil. As well as with twenty others, madam. It is the glory and honour of a great fortune to live in continual treaties, and still to break off; it looks great, madam.

Mrs Seal. True, Phillis—yet to return our blood again into the Cimbertons' is an honour not to be rejected.—But were not you saying that Sir John Bevil's creature, Humphrey, has been with Mr Sealand?

Phil. Yes, madam, I overheard them agree that Mr Sealand should go himself and visit this unknown lady that Mr Bevil is so great with, and if he found nothing there to fright him, that Mr Bevil should still marry my young mistress.

Mrs Seal. How! nay, then he shall find she is my daughter as well as his—I'll follow him this instant, and take the whole family along with me. The disputed power of disposing of my own daughter shall be at an end this very night.—— I'll live no longer in anxiety for a little hussy that hurts my appearance wherever I carry her, and for whose sake I seem to be not at all regarded, and that in the best of my days.

Phil. Indeed, madam, if she were married,

your ladyship might very well be taken for Mr Sealand's daughter.

Mrs Seal. Nay, when the chit has not been with me I have heard the men say as much—I'll no longer cut off the greatest pleasure of a woman's life (the shining in assemblies) by her forward anticipation of the respect that's due to her superior—She shall down to Cimberton-hall —she shall—she shall.

Phil. I hope, madam, I shall stay with your ladyship.

Mrs Seal. Thou shalt, Phillis, and I'll place thee then more about me——But order chairs immediately——I'll be gone this minute.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Charing-Cross.*

Enter Mr SEALAND *and* HUMPHREY.

Mr Seal. I am very glad, Mr Humphrey, that you agree with me, that it is for our common good I should look thoroughly into this matter.

Humph. I am indeed of that opinion; for there is no artifice, nothing concealed in our family which ought in justice to be known. I need not desire you, sir, to treat the lady with care and respect.

Mr Seal. Mr Humphrey—I shall not be rude, though I design to be a little abrupt, and come into the matter at once, to see how she will bear upon a surprise——

Humph. That's the door; sir, I wish you success. [*While* HUMPHREY *speaks,* SEALAND *consults his table book.*] I am less concern'd what happens there, because I hear Mr Myrtle is as well lodg'd as old Sir Geoffry, so I am willing to let this gentleman employ himself here to give them time at home; for I am sure it is necessary for the quiet of our family that Lucinda were dispos'd of out of it, since Mr Bevil's inclination is so much otherwise engaged. [*Exit.*

Mr Seal. I think this is the door. [*Knocks.*] I'll carry this matter with an air of authority, to enquire, though I make an errand to begin discourse. [*Knocks again, enter a footboy.*] So, young man, is your lady within?

Boy. A-lack, sir! I am but a country boy—I don't know whether she is or noa; but an you'll stay a bit I'll goa and ask the gentlewoman that's with her.

Mr Seal. Why, sirrah, though you are a country boy, you can see, cann't you? you know whether she is at home when you see her, don't you?

Boy. Nay, nay, I'm not such a country lad neither, master, to think she is at home because I see her; I have been in town but a month, and I lost one place already for believing my own eyes.

Mr Seal. Why, sirrah, have you learnt to lie already?

Boy. Ah, master! things that are lies in the country are not lies at London—I begin to know my business a little better than so——but an you please to walk in, I'll call a gentlewoman to you that can tell you for certain——she can make bold to ask my lady herself.

Mr Seal. Oh, then she is within I find, though you dare not say so.

Boy. Nay, nay, that's neither here nor there; what's the matter whether she is within or no, if she has not a mind to see any body?

Mr Seal. I cann't tell, sirrah, whether you are arch or simple; but, however, get me a direct answer, and here's a shilling for you.

Boy. Will you please to walk in? I'll see what I can do for you.

Mr Seal. I see you will be fit for your business in time, child; but I expect to meet with nothing but extraordinaries in such a house.

Boy. Such a house, sir! you ha'n't seen it yet. Pray walk in.

Mr Seal. Sir, I'll wait upon you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—INDIANA'S *House.*

Enter ISABELLA *and Boy.*

Isab. What anxiety do I feel for this poor creature! What will be the end of her? Such a languishing unreserved passion for a man that at last must certainly leave or ruin her, and perhaps both! then the aggravation of the distress is that she dare not believe he will——not but I must own, if they are both what they would seem, they are made for one another as much as Adam and Eve were, for there is no other of their kind but themselves. So, Daniel, what news with you?

Boy. Madam, there's a gentleman below would speak with my lady.

Isab. Sirrah, don't you know Mr Bevil yet?

Boy. Madam, 'tis not the gentleman who comes every day and asks for you, and won't go in till he knows whether you are with her or no.

Isab. Ha! that's a particular I did not know before. Well, be who it will, let him come up to me.

[*Exit Boy, and re-enters with Mr* SEALAND. ISABELLA *looks amazed.*

Mr Seal. Madam, I cann't blame your being a little surpris'd to see a perfect stranger make a visit, and——

Isab. I am indeed surpris'd——I see he does not know me. [*Aside.*

Mr Seal. You are very prettily lodg'd here, madam; in troth you seem to have every thing in plenty——a thousand a-year I warrant you, upon this pretty nest of rooms, and the dainty one within them. [*Aside, and looking about.*

Isab. [*Apart.*] Twenty years, it seems, have less effect in the alteration of a man of thirty than of a girl of fourteen—he's almost still the same: but, alas! I find by other men as well as himself I am not what I was.—As soon as he spoke, I was convinced 'twas he.—How shall I contain my surprise and satisfaction!—He must not know me yet.

Mr Seal. Madam, I hope I don't give you any disturbance; but there is a young lady here with

whom I have a particular business to discourse, and I hope she will admit me to that favour.

Isab. Why, sir, have you had any notice concerning her? I wonder who could give it you.

Mr Seal. That, madam, is fit only to be communicated to herself.

Isab. Well, sir, you shall see her——I find he knows nothing yet, nor shall for me: I am resolved I will observe this interlude, this sport of nature and fortune.—You shall see her presently, sir; for now I am as a mother, and will trust her with you. [*Exit.*

Mr Seal. As a mother! right; that's the old phrase for one of those commode ladies who lend out beauty for hire to young gentlemen that have pressing occasions. But here comes the precious lady herself: in troth, a very sightly woman!

Enter INDIANA.

Ind. I am told, sir, you have some affair that requires your speaking with me.

Mr Seal. Yes, madam. There came to my hands a bill drawn by Mr Bevil, which is payable to-morrow, and he, in the intercourse of business, sent it to me, who have cash of his, and desired me to send a servant with it; but I have made bold to bring you the money myself.

Ind. Sir, was that necessary?

Mr Seal. No, madam; but to be free with you, the fame of your beauty, and the regard which Mr Bevil is a little too well known to have for you, excited my curiosity.

Ind. Too well known to have for me! Your sober appearance, sir, which my friend described, made me expect no rudeness or absurdity at least. ——Who's there? Sir, if you pay the money to a servant 'twill be as well.

Mr Seal. Pray, madam, be not offended; I came hither on an innocent, nay, a virtuous design; and if you will have patience to hear me, it may be as useful to you, as you are in friendship with Mr Bevil, as to my only daughter, whom I was this day disposing of.

Ind. You make me hope, sir, I have mistaken you: I am compos'd again: be free, say on—what I am afraid to hear. [*Aside.*

Mr Seal. I fear'd, indeed, an unwarranted passion here, but I did not think it was in abuse of so worthy an object, so accomplish'd a lady, as your sense and mien bespeak—but the youth of our age care not what merit and virtue they bring to shame, so they gratify————

Ind. Sir—you are going into very great errors—but as you are pleas'd to say you see something in me that has chang'd at least the colour of your suspicions, so has your appearance alter'd mine, and made me earnestly attentive to what has any way concern'd you, to enquire into my affairs and character.

Mr Seal. How sensibly, with what an air she talks!

Ind. Good sir, be seated—and tell me tenderly—keep all your suspicions concerning me alive, that you may, in a proper and prepared way, acquaint me, why the care of your daughter obliges a person of your seeming worth and fortune to be thus inquisitive about a wretched, helpless, friendless—[*Weeping.*] But I beg your pardon—though I am an orphan, your child is not, and your concern for her, it seems, has brought you hither—I'll be compos'd—pray go on, sir.

Mr Seal. How could Mr Bevil be such a monster to injure such a woman!

Ind. No, sir, you wrong him; he has not injured me—my support is from his bounty.

Mr Seal. Bounty! when gluttons give high prices for delicates, they are prodigious bountiful!

Ind. Still, still you will persist in that error—but my own fears tell me all. You are the gentleman, I suppose, for whose happy daughter he is design'd a husband by his good father, and he has, perhaps, consented to the overture, and he is to be, perhaps, this night a bridegroom.

Mr Seal. I own he was intended such; but, madam, on your account, I am determined to defer my daughter's marriage, till I am satisfied, from your own mouth, of what nature are the obligations you are under to him.

Ind. His actions, sir, his eyes, have only made me think he design'd to make me the partner of his heart. The goodness and gentleness of his demeanour made me misinterpret all; 'twas my own hope, my own passion, that deluded me; he never made one amorous advance to me; his large heart and bestowing hand have only help'd the miserable: nor know I why, but from his mere delight in virtue, that I have been his care, the object on which to indulge and please himself with pouring favours.

Mr Seal. Madam, I know not why it is, but I, as well as you, am methinks afraid of entering into the matter I came about; but 'tis the same thing as if we had talk'd ever so distinctly—he ne'er shall have a daughter of mine.

Ind. If you say this from what you think of me, you wrong yourself and him. Let not me, miserable though I may be, do injury to my benefactor: no, sir, my treatment ought rather to reconcile you to his virtues.—If to bestow without a prospect of return, if to delight in supporting what might, perhaps, be thought an object of desire, with no other view than to be her guard against those who would not be so disinterested, if these actions, sir, can in a careful parent's eye commend him to a daughter, give yours, sir, give her to my honest, generous Bevil!—What have I to do but sigh, and weep, to rave, run wild, a lunatic in chains, or, hid in darkness, mutter in distracted starts and broken accents my strange, strange story!

Mr Seal. Take comfort, madam.

Ind. All my comfort must be to expostulate in madness, to relieve with frenzy my despair, and, shrieking, to demand of Fate why, why was I born to such variety of sorrows!

Mr Seal. If I have been the least occasion—

Ind. No; 'twas Heaven's high will I should be such—to be plunder'd in my cradle, toss'd on the

seas, and even there, an infant captive, to lose my mother, hear but of my father—to be adopted, lose my adopter, then plunged again in worse calamities!

Mr Seal. An infant captive!

Ind. Yet then to find the most charming of mankind once more to set me free from what I thought the last distress, to load me with his services, his bounties, and his favours, to support my very life in a way that stole, at the same time, my very soul itself from me!

Mr Seal. And has young Bevil been this worthy man?

Ind. Yet then again, this very man to take another without leaving me the right, the pretence, of easing my fond heart with tears!—for oh! I cann't reproach him, though the same hand that raised me to this height now throws me down the precipice.

Mr Seal. Dear lady! oh, yet one moment's patience; my heart grows full with your affliction! but yet there's something in your story that promises relief when you least hope it.

Ind. My portion here is bitterness and sorrow.

Mr Seal. Do not think so. Pray answer me; does Bevil know your name and family?

Ind. Alas, too well! Oh! could I be any other thing than what I am—I'll tear away all traces of my former self, my little ornaments, the remains of my first state, the hints of what I ought to have been———

[*In her disorder she throws away her bracelet, which* SEALAND *takes up, and looks earnestly at it.*

Mr Seal. Ha! what's this? my eyes are not deceiv'd! it is, it is the same; the very bracelet which I bequeathed my wife at our last mouruful parting.

Ind. What said you, sir? your wife! Whither does my fancy carry me? what means this new felt motion at my heart? And yet again my fortune but deludes me; for if I err not, sir, your name is Sealand; but my lost father's name was———

Mr Seal. Danvers, was it not?

Ind. What new amazement! that is, indeed, my family.

Mr Seal. Know then, when my misfortunes drove me to the Indies, for reasons too tedious now to mention, I chang'd my name of Danvers into Sealand.

Enter ISABELLA.

Isab. If yet there wants an explanation of your wonder, examine well this face—yours, sir, I well remember—Gaze on, and read in me your sister Isabella.

Mr Seal. My sister!

Isab. But here's a claim more tender yet—your Indiana, sir, your long-lost daughter.

Mr Seal. Oh, my child, my child!

Ind. All-gracious Heav'n! is it possible? do I embrace my father?

Mr Seal. And do I hold thee?—These passions are too strong for utterance.—Rise, rise, my child, and give my tears their way—Oh, my sister! [*Embracing her.*

Isab. Now, dearest niece! my groundless fears, my painful cares, no more shall vex thee: if I have wrong'd thy noble lover with too hard suspicions, my just concern for thee I hope will plead my pardon.

Mr Seal. Oh, make him then the full amends, and be yourself the messenger of joy: fly this instant—tell him all these wondrous turns of Providence in his favour; tell him now I have a daughter to bestow which he no longer will decline; that this day he still shall be a bridegroom; nor shall a fortune, the merit which his father seeks, be wanting. Tell him the reward of all his virtues waits on his acceptance. [*Exit* ISABELLA.] My dearest Indiana!

[*Turns and embraces her.*

Ind. Have I then at last a father's sanction on my love? his bounteous hand to give, and make my heart a present worthy of Bevil's generosity?

Mr Seal. Oh, my child! how are our sorrows past o'erpaid by such a meeting! Though I have lost so many years of soft paternal dalliance with thee, yet in one day to find thee thus, and thus bestow thee, in such perfect happiness, is ample, ample reparation! and yet again the merit of thy lover———

Ind. Oh, had I spirits left to tell you of his actions! how strongly filial duty has suppressed his love, and how concealment still has doubled all his obligation, the pride, the joy of his alliance, sir, would warm your heart, as he has conquered mine.

Mr Seal. How laudable is love when born of virtue! I burn to embrace him.

Ind. See, sir, my aunt already has succeeded, and brought him to your wishes.

Enter ISABELLA *with Sir* JOHN BEVIL, BEVIL *Jun. Mrs* SEALAND, CIMBERTON, MYRTLE, *and* LUCINDA.

Sir J. B. [*Entering.*] Where, where's this scene of wonder!——Mr Sealand, I congratulate on this occasion our mutual happiness—Your good sister, sir, has with the story of your daughter's fortune fill'd us with surprise and joy. Now all exceptions are remov'd; my son has now avow'd his love, and turn'd all former jealousies and doubts into approbation, and I am told your goodness has consented to reward him.

Mr Seal. If, sir, a fortune equal to his father's hopes can make this object worthy his acceptance.

B. jun. I hear your mention, sir, of fortune with pleasure, only as it may prove the means to reconcile the best of fathers to my love; let him be provident, but let me be happy.—My ever destined, my acknowledged wife!

[*Embracing* INDIANA.

Ind. Wife!—oh! my ever-loved, my lord, my master!

Sir J. B. I congratulate myself as well as you that I have a son who could, under such disadvantages, discover your great merit.

Mr Seal. Oh, Sir John, how vain, how weak is human prudence! what care, what foresight, what imagination could contrive such blest events to make our children happy, as Providence in one short hour has laid before us?

Cimb. [*To Mrs* SEALAND.] I am afraid, madam, Mr Sealand is a little too busy for our affair; if you please we'll take another opportunity.

Mrs Seal. Let us have patience, sir.

Cimb. But we make Sir Geoffry wait, madam.

Myrt. Oh, sir, I'm not in haste.

[*During this,* BEVIL *jun. presents* LUCINDA *to* INDIANA.

Mr Seal. But here, here's our general benefactor. Excellent young man! that could be at once a lover to her beauty, and a parent to her virtue!

B. jun. If you think that an obligation, sir, give me leave to overpay myself in the only instance that can now add to my felicity, by begging you to bestow this lady on Mr Myrtle.

Mr Seal. She is his without reserve; I beg he may be sent for.——Mr Cimberton, notwithstanding you never had my consent, yet there is, since I saw you, another objection to your marriage with my daughter.

Cimb. I hope, sir, your lady has conceal'd nothing from me?

Mr Seal. Troth, sir, nothing but what was concealed from myself; another daughter, who has an undoubted title to half my estate.

Cimb. How, Mr Sealand! why then, if half Mrs Lucinda's fortune is gone, you cann't say that any of my estate is settled upon her; I was in treaty for the whole: but if that's not to be come at, to be sure there can be no bargain.—Sir—I have nothing to do but to take my leave of your good lady my cousin, and beg pardon for the trouble I have given this old gentleman.

Myrt. That you have, Mr Cimberton, with all my heart. [*Discovers himself.*

Omnes. Mr Myrtle!

Myrt. And I beg pardon of the whole company that I assumed the person of Sir Geoffry only to be present at the danger of this lady's being disposed of, and in her utmost exigence to assert my right to her, which if her parents will ratify, as they once favour'd my pretensions, no abatement of fortune shall lessen her value to me.

Luc. Generous man!

Mr Seal. If, sir, you can overlook the injury of being in treaty with one who has meanly left her, as you have generously asserted your right in her, she is yours.

Luc. Mr Myrtle, though you have ever had my heart, yet now I find I love you more, because I deserve you less.

Mr Seal. Well, however, I'm glad the girl's dispos'd of any way. [*Aside.*

B. jun. Myrtle, no longer rivals now but brothers.

Myrt. Dear Bevil! you are born to triumph over me; but now our competition ceases: I rejoice in the pre-eminence of your virtue, and your alliance adds charms to Lucinda.

Sir J. B. Now, ladies and gentlemen, you have set the world a fair example; your happiness is owing to your constancy and merit, and the several difficulties you have struggled with evidently shew,

Whate'er the generous mind itself denies,
The secret care of Providence supplies.

[*Exeunt.*

EPILOGUE.

Intended to be spoken by INDIANA.

OUR author, whom entreaties cannot move,
Spite of the dear coquetry that you love,
Swears he'll not frustrate, so he plainly means,
By a loose epilogue his decent scenes.
Is it not, sirs, hard fate I meet to-day,
To keep me rigid still beyond the play?
And yet I'm sav'd a world of pains that way:
I now can look, I now can move, at ease,
Nor need I torture these poor limbs to please,
Nor with a hand or foot attempt surprise,
Nor wrest my features nor fatigue my eyes.
Bless me! what freakish gambols have I play'd,
What motions try'd and wanton looks betray'd,
Out of pure kindness all! to over-rule
The threaten'd hiss, and screen some scribbling fool.
With more respect I'm entertain'd to-night;
Our author thinks I can with ease delight:

My artless looks, while modest graces arm,
He says I need but to appear, and charm.
A wife so form'd, by these examples bred,
Pours joy and gladness round the marriage-bed,
Soft source of comfort, kind relief from care,
And 'tis her least perfection to be fair.
The nymph with Indiana's worth who vies,
A nation will behold with Bevil's eyes.

THE

BUSY BODY.

BY

Mrs CENTLIVRE.

PROLOGUE.

THOUGH modern prophets were expos'd of late,
The author could not prophecy her fate:
If with such scenes an audience had been fir'd,
The poet must have really been inspir'd.
But these, alas! are melancholy days
For modern prophets and for modern plays:
Yet, since prophetic lies please fools o' fashion,
And women are so fond of agitation,
To men of sense I'll prophecy anew,
And tell you wondrous things that will prove true.
Undaunted col'nels will to camps repair,
Assur'd there'll be no skirmishes this year;
On our own terms will flow the wish'd-for peace,
All wars except 'twixt man and wife will cease;
The grand monarque may wish his son a throne,
But hardly will advance to lose his own.
This season most things bear a smiling face,
But play'rs in summer have a dismal case,
Since your appearance only is our act of grace.
Court-ladies will to country-seats be gone,
My lord cann't all the year live great in town;
Where, wanting operas, basset, and a play,
They'll sigh, and stitch a gown, to pass the time
away:
Gay city wives at Tunbridge will appear,
Whose husbands long have labour'd for an heir,
Where many a courtier may their wants relieve,
But by the waters only they conceive;
The Fleet-street sempstress—toast of Temple
sparks,
That runs spruce neckloths for attorneys' clerks,
At Cupid's gardens will her hours regale,
Sing fair Dorinda, and drink bottled ale:
At all assemblies rakes her up and down,
And gamesters where they think they are not
known.

Should I denounce our author's fate to-day,
To cry down prophecies you'd damn the play:
Yet whims like these have sometimes made you
laugh;
'Tis tattling all, like Isaac Bickerstaff.

Since war and places claim the bards that write,
Be kind, and bear a woman's treat to-night;
Let your indulgence all her fears allay,
And none but women-haters damn this play.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Sir GEORGE AIRY, *a Gentleman of four thousand a-year, in love with Miranda.*

Sir FRANCIS GRIPE, *Guardian to Miranda and Marplot, Father to Charles, in love with Miranda.*

CHARLES, *Friend to Sir George, in love with Isabinda.*

Sir JEALOUS TRAFFICK, *a Merchant that had lived some time in Spain, Father to Isabinda.*

MARPLOT, *a sort of silly Fellow, cowardly, but very inquisitive to know every body's business.*

WHISPER, *Servant to Charles.*

WOMEN.

MIRANDA, *an Heiress, worth thirty thousand pounds, really in love with Sir George, but pretends to be so with her guardian, Sir Francis.*

ISABINDA, *Daughter to Sir Jealous, in love with Charles, but designed for a Spanish Merchant by her Father.*

PATCH, *her Woman.*

SCENTWELL, *Woman to Miranda.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Park.*

Sir GEORGE AIRY *meeting* CHARLES.

Cha. Ha! Sir George Airy a-birding thus early! what forbidden game rous'd you so soon? for no lawful occasion could invite a person of your figure abroad, at such unfashionable hours.

Sir Geo. There are some men, Charles, whom fortune has left free from inquietudes, who are diligently studious to find out ways and means to make themselves uneasy.

Cha. Is it possible that any thing in nature can ruffle the temper of a man whom the four seasons of the year compliment with as many thousand pounds, nay, and a father at rest with his ancestors?

Sir Geo. Why, there it is now! a man that wants money thinks none can be unhappy that has it; but my affairs are in such a whimsical posture, that it will require a calculation of my nativity to find if my gold will relieve me or not.

Cha. Ha, ha, ha! never consult the stars about that; gold has a power beyond them, gold unlocks the midnight councils, gold outdoes the wind, becalms the ship, or fills her sails! gold is omnipotent below; it makes whole armies fight or fly; it buys even souls, and bribes wretches to betray their country: then, what can thy business be that gold won't serve thee in?

Sir Geo. Why, I'm in love.

Cha. In love!——Ha, ha, ha, ha! in love!——Ha, ha, ha, ha! with what, pr'ythee? a cherubine?

Sir Geo. No, with a woman.

Cha. A woman! good. Ha, ha, ha, ha! and gold not help thee?

Sir Geo. But suppose I'm in love with two—

Cha. Ay, if thou'rt in love with two hundred, gold will fetch 'em, I warrant thee, boy. But who are they? who are they? come.

Sir Geo. One is a lady whose face I never saw, but witty to a miracle; the other beautiful as Venus——

Cha. And a fool—

Sir Geo. For aught I know, for I never spoke to her: but you can inform me. I am charm'd by the wit of the one, and die for the beauty of the other.

Cha. And, pray, which are you in quest of now?

Sir Geo. I prefer the sensual pleasure; I'm for her I've seen, who is thy father's ward, Miranda.

Cha. Nay, then, I pity you; for the Jew my father will no more part with her and thirty thousand pounds than he would with a guinea to keep me from starving.

Sir Geo. Now, you see gold cann't do every thing, Charles.

Cha. Yes, for 'tis her gold that bars my father's gate against you.

Sir Geo. Why, if he be this avaricious wretch, how cam'st thou by such a liberal education?

Cha. Not a sous out of his pocket, I assure you: I had an uncle who defray'd that charge; but for some little wildnesses of youth, though he made me his heir, left dad my guardian till I came to years of discretion, which I presume the old gentleman will never think I am! and now, he has got the estate into his clutches, it does me no more good than if it lay in Prester John's dominions.

Sir Geo. What, canst thou find no stratagem to redeem it?

Cha. I have made many essays to no purpose; though want, the mistress of invention, still tempts me on, yet still the old fox is too cunning for me.—I am upon my last project, which, if it fails, then for my last refuge, a brown musquet.

Sir Geo. What is't? can I assist thee?

Cha. Not yet; when you can, I have confidence enough in you to ask it.

Sir Geo. I am always ready. But what does he intend to do with Miranda? Is she to be sold in private, or will he put her up by way of auction, at who bids most? if so, 'egad I'm for him; my gold, as you say, shall be subservient to my pleasure.

Cha. To deal ingenuously with you, Sir George, I know very little of her or home; for, since my uncle's death and my return from travel, I have never been well with my father; he thinks my expences too great, and I his allowance too little; he never sees me but he quarrels, and, to avoid that, I shun his house as much as possible. The report is, he intends to marry her himself.

Sir Geo. Can she consent to it?

Cha. Yes, faith, so they say: but I tell you, I am wholly ignorant of the matter. Miranda and I are like two violent members of a contrary party; I can scarce allow her beauty, though all the world does, nor she me civility for that contempt. I fancy she plays the mother-in-law already, and sets the old gentleman on to do mischief.

Sir Geo. Then I have your free consent to get her?

Cha. Ay, and my helping hand, if occasion be.

Sir Geo. Poh! yonder's a fool coming this way, let's avoid him.

Cha. What, Marplot? No, no, he's my instrument; there's a thousand conveniencies in him; he'll lend me his money when he has any, run of my errands, and be proud on't; in short, he'll pimp for me, lie for me, drink for me, do any thing but fight for me; and that I trust to my own arm for.

Sir Geo. Nay, then, he's to be endured; I never knew his qualifications before.

Enter MARPLOT, *with a patch cross his face.*

Mar. Dear Charles, yours—Ha! Sir George Airy! the man in the world I have an ambition to be known to. [*Aside.*] Give me thy hand, dear boy.

Cha. A good assurance! But, hark ye, how came your beautiful countenance clouded in the wrong place?

Mar. I must confess 'tis a little mal à-propos; but no matter for that. A word with you, Charles. Pr'ythee, introduce me to Sir George—he is a man of wit, and I'd give ten guineas to——

Cha. When you have 'em, you mean.

Mar. Ay, when I have 'em; pugh, pox, you cut the thread of my discourse———I would give ten guineas, I say, to be rank'd in his acquaintance. Well, 'tis a vast addition to a man's fortune, according to the rout of the world, to be seen in the company of leading men; for then we are all thought to be politicians, or whigs, or jacks, or high-flyers, or low-flyers, or levellers—and so forth; for you must know we all herd in parties now.

Cha. Then a fool for diversion is out of fashion I find.

Mar. Yes, without it be a mimicking fool, and they are darlings every where. But, pr'ythee, introduce me.

Cha. Well, on condition you'll give us a true account how you came by that mourning nose, I will.

Mar. I'll do it.

Cha. Sir George, here's a gentleman has a passionate desire to kiss your hand.

Sir Geo. Oh, I honour men of the sword! and I presume this gentleman is lately come from Spain or Portugal—by his scars.

Mar. No, really, Sir George, mine sprung from civil fury. Happening last night into the groom porter's—I had a strong inclination to go ten guineas with a sort of a, sort of a—kind of a milksop, as I thought. A pox of the dice! he flung out, and my pockets being empty, as Charles knows they often are, he proved a surly North Briton, and broke my face for my deficiency.

Sir Geo. Ha, ha! and did not you draw?

Mar. Draw, sir! why, I did but lay my hand upon my sword to make a swift retreat, and he roar'd out, Now the deel ha ma saul, sir, gin ye touch yer steel I'se whip mine through yer wem.

Sir Geo. Ha, ha, ha!

Cha. Ha, ha, ha, ha! Safe was the word. So you walk'd off, I suppose.

Mar. Yes, for I avoid fighting, purely to be serviceable to my friends, you know—

Sir Geo. Your friends are much obliged to you, sir: I hope you'll rank me in that number.

Mar. Sir George, a bow from the side box, or to be seen in your chariot, binds me ever yours.

Sir Geo. Trifles; you may command 'em when you please.

Cha. Provided he may command you.

Mar. Me! Why I live for no other purpose ——Sir George, I have the honour to be caress'd by most of the reigning toasts of the town: I'll tell 'em you are the finest gentleman—

Sir Geo. No, no, pr'ythee let me alone to tell the ladies my parts—Can you convey a letter upon occasion, or deliver a message with an air of business, ha?

Mar. With the assurance of a page and the gravity of a statesman.

Sir Geo. You know Miranda.

Mar. What! my sister ward? why, her guar-

dian is mine; we are fellow-sufferers. Ah, he is a covetous, cheating, sanctified curmudgeon: that Sir Francis Gripe is a damn'd old—hypocritical—

Cha. Hold, hold; I suppose, friend, you forget that he is my father.

Mar. 'Egad, and so I did; Charles—I ask your pardon, Charles, but it is for your sake I hate him. Well, I say the world is mistaken in him; his outside piety makes him every man's executor, and his inside cunning makes him every heir's gaoler. 'Egad, Charles, I'm half persuaded that thou'rt some ward too, and never of his getting—for never were two things so unlike as you and your father; he scrapes up every thing, and thou spend'st every thing; every body is indebted to him, and thou art indebted to every body.

Cha. You are very free, Mr Marplot.

Mar. Ay, I give and take, Charles—you may be as free with me you know.

Sir Geo. A pleasant fellow.

Cha. The dog is diverting sometimes, or there would be no enduring his impertinence. He is pressing to be employed, and willing to execute; but some ill fate generally attends all he undertakes, and he oftener spoils an intrigue than helps it.

Mar. I have always your good word, but if I miscarry 'tis none of my fault; I follow my instructions.

Cha. Yes, witness the merchant's wife.

Mar. Pish, pox! that was an accident.

Sir Geo. What was it, pr'ythee?

Mar. Nay, Charles, now don't expose your friend.

Cha. Why, you must know I had lent a certain merchant my hunting horses, and was to have met his wife in his absence. Sending him along with my groom to make the compliment, and to deliver a letter to the lady at the same time, what does he do but gives the husband the letter, and offers her the horses!

Mar. Why, to be sure, I did offer her the horses, and I remember you was even with me, for you deny'd the letter to be yours, and swore I had a design upon her, which my bones paid for.

Cha. Come, Sir George, let's walk round, if you are not engag'd, for I have sent my man upon a little earnest business, and I have ordered him to bring me the answer into the Park.

Mar. Business! and I not know it! Egad, I'll watch him.

Sir Geo. I must beg your pardon, Charles, I am to meet your father.

Cha. My father!

Sir Geo. Ay, and about the oddest bargain, perhaps, you ever heard of; but I'll not impart till I know the success.

Mar. What can his business be with Sir Francis! Now would I give all the world to know it. Why the devil should not one know every man's concerns! [*Aside.*

Cha. Prosperity to't, whatever it be: I have private affairs too: over a bottle we'll compare notes.

Mar. Charles knows I love a glass as well as any man; I'll make one; shall it be to-night? Adad, I long to know their secrets. [*Aside.*

Enter WHISPER.

Whisp. Sir, sir, Mrs Patch says Isabinda's Spanish father has quite spoil'd the plot, and she cann't meet you in the Park, but he infallibly will go out this afternoon she says: but I must step again to know the hour.

Mar. What did Whisper say now! I shall go stark mad if I'm not let into the secret. [*Aside.*

Cha. Curst misfortune!

Mar. Curst! what's curst, Charles?

Cha. Come along with me, my heart feels pleasure at her name. Sir George, yours; we'll meet at the old place the usual hour.

Sir Geo. Agreed. I think I see Sir Francis yonder. [*Exit.*

Cha. Marplot, you must excuse me; I am engag'd. [*Exit.*

Mar. Engag'd! Egad, I'll engage my life I'll know what your engagement is. [*Exit.*

Mir. [*Coming out of a chair.*] Let the chair wait. My servant that dogg'd Sir George said he was in the Park.

Enter PATCH.

Ha! Miss Patch alone! did not you tell me you had contrived a way to bring Isabinda to the Park?

Patch. Oh, madam, your ladyship cann't imagine what a wretched disappointment we have met with! Just as I had fetch'd a suit of my clothes for a disguise, comes my old master into the closet, which is right against her chamber-door: this struck us into a terrible fright—at length I put on a grave face, and ask'd him if he was at leisure for his chocolate? in hopes to draw him out of his hole; but he snapp'd my nose off: No, I shall be busy here these two hours. At which my poor mistress seeing no way of escape, ordered me to wait on your ladyship with the sad relation.

Mir. Unhappy Isabinda! was ever any thing so unaccountable as the humour of Sir Jealous Traffick?

Patch. Oh, madam, it's his living so long in Spain; he vows he'll spend half his estate, but he'll be a parliament-man, on purpose to bring in a bill for women to wear veils, and other odious Spanish customs—He swears it is the height of impudence to have a woman seen bare-fac'd even at church, and scarce believes there's a true begotten child in the city.

Mir. Ha, ha, ha! how the old fool torments himself! Suppose he could introduce his rigid rules—does he think we could not match them in contrivance? No, no; let the tyrant man make what laws he will, if there's a woman under the government, I warrant she finds a way to break 'em. Is his mind set upon the Spaniard for his son-in-law still?

Patch. Ay, and he expects him by the next

fleet, which drives his daughter to melancholy and despair. But, madam, I find you retain the same gay cheerful spirit you had when I waited on your ladyship.—My lady is mighty good humour'd too, and I have found a way to make Sir Jealous believe I am wholly in his interest, when my real design is to serve her; he makes me her gaoler, and I set her at liberty.

Mir. I knew thy prolific brain would be of singular service to her, or I had not parted with thee to her father.

Patch. But, madam, the report is that you are going to marry your guardian.

Mir. It is necessary such a report should be, Patch.

Patch. But is it true, madam?

Mir. That's not absolutely necessary.

Patch. I thought it was only the old strain, coaxing him still for your own, and railing at all the young fellows about town: in my mind, now, you are as ill plagu'd with your guardian, madam, as my lady is with her father.

Mir. No, I have liberty, wench; that she wants: what would she give now to be in this dishabille in the open air, nay, more, in pursuit of the young fellow she likes? for that's my case I assure you.

Patch. As for that, madam, she's even with you; for tho' she cann't come abroad, we have a way to bring him home in spite of old Argus.

Mir. Now, Patch, your opinion of my choice, for here he comes.—Ha! my guardian with him! what can be the meaning of this? I'm sure Sir Francis cann't know me in this dress.—Let's observe 'em. [*They withdraw.*

Enter Sir FRANCIS GRIPE *and Sir* GEORGE AIRY.

Sir Fran. Verily, Sir George, thou wilt repent throwing away thy money so, for I tell thee sincerely, Miranda, my charge, does not like a young fellow; they are all vicious, and seldom make good husbands: in sober sadness she cannot abide 'em.

Mir. [*Peeping.*] In sober sadness you are mistaken.—What can this mean?

Sir Geo. Look ye, Sir Francis, whether she can or cannot abide young fellows is not the business. Will you take the fifty guineas?

Sir Fran. In good truth I will not—for I knew thy father, he was a hearty wary man, and I cannot consent that his son should squander away what he sav'd to no purpose.

Mir. [*Peeping.*] Now, in the name of wonder, what bargain can he be driving about me for fifty guineas?

Patch. I wish it ben't for the first night's lodging, madam.

Sir Geo. Well, Sir Francis, since you are so conscientious for my father's sake, then permit me the favour gratis.

Mir. [*Peeping.*] The favour! O' my life, I believe 'tis as you said, Patch.

Sir Fran. No, verily; if thou dost not buy thy experience, thou wilt never be wise; therefore, give me a hundred, and try thy fortune.

Sir Geo. The scruples arose, I find, from the scanty sum.——Let me see—a hundred guineas —[*Takes 'em out of a purse and chinks 'em.*] Ha! they have a pretty sound, and a very pleasing look—But then, Miranda—but if she should be cruel——

Mir. [*Peeping.*] As ten to one I shall——

Sir Fran. Ay, do consider on't. He, he, he!

Sir Geo. No, I'll do't.

Patch. Do't! what, whether you will or no, madam!

Sir Geo. Come, to the point; here's the gold; sum up the conditions.——

[*Sir* FRANCIS *pulling out a paper.*]

Mir. [*Peeping.*] Ay, for Heaven's sake do, for my expectation is on the rack.

Sir Fran. Well, at your peril be it.

Sir Geo. Ay, ay, go on.

Sir Fran. Imprimis, you are to be admitted into my house, in order to move your suit to Miranda, for the space of ten minutes, without let or molestation, provided I remain in the same room.

Sir Geo. But out of ear-shot.

Sir Fran. Well, well, I don't desire to hear what you say; ha, ha, ha! in consideration I am to have that purse and a hundred guineas.

Sir Geo. Take it—— [*Gives him the purse.*

Mir. [*Peeping.*] So, 'tis well it's no worse; I'll fit you both——

Sir Geo. And this agreement is to be performed to-day.

Sir Fran. Ay, ay; the sooner the better. Poor fool! how Miranda and I shall laugh at him!—Well, Sir George, ha, ha, ha! take the last sound of your guineas, ha, ha, ha! [*Chinks 'em.*] [*Exit.*

Mir. [*Peeping.*] Sure he does not know I am Miranda.

Sir Geo. A very extraordinary bargain I have made, truly; if she should be really in love with this old cuff now——Psha! that's morally impossible.——But then, what hopes have I to succeed? I never spoke to her——

Mir. [*Peeping.*] Say you so? then I am safe.

Sir Geo. What tho' my tongue never spoke? my eyes said a thousand things, and my hopes flatter'd me hers answer'd 'em. If I'm lucky—if not, it is but a hundred guineas thrown away.

[MIRANDA *and* PATCH *come forward.*

Mir. Upon what, Sir George?

Sir Geo. Ha! my incognita—upon a woman, madam.

Mir. They are the worst things you can deal in, and damage the soonest; your very breath destroys 'em, and I fear you'll never see your return, Sir George, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. Were they more brittle than china, and dropped to pieces with a touch, every atom of her I have ventur'd at, if she is but mistress of thy wit, balances ten times the sum.—Pry'thee, let me see thy face.

Mir. By no means; that may spoil your opinion of my sense——

Sir Geo. Rather confirm it, madam.

Patch. So rob the lady of your gallantry, sir.

Sir Geo. No, child, a dish of chocolate in the morning never spoils my dinner: the other lady I design a set meal; so there's no danger.—

Mir. Matrimony! ha, ha, ha! what crimes have you committed against the god of Love, that he should revenge 'em so severely, to stamp husband on your forehead?

Sir Geo. For my folly, in having so often met you here without pursuing the laws of Nature, and exercising her command——But I resolve ere we part now, to know who you are, where you live, what kind of flesh and blood your face is; therefore unmask, and don't put me to the trouble of doing it for you.

Mir. My face is the same flesh and blood with my hand, Sir George, which, if you'll be so rude to provoke—

Sir Geo. You'll apply it to my cheek—the ladies favours are always welcome, but I must have that cloud withdrawn. [*Taking hold of her.*] Remember you are in the Park, child; and what a terrible thing would it be to lose this pretty white hand?

Mir. And how will it sound in a chocolate house that Sir George Airy rudely pulled off a lady's mask, when he had given her his honour that he never would, directly or indirectly, endeavour to know her till she gave him leave?

Patch. I wish we were safe out.

Sir Geo. But if that lady thinks fit to pursue and meet me at every turn, like some troubled spirit, shall I be blam'd if I enquire into the reality? I would have nothing dissatisfied in a female shape.

Mir. What shall I do? [*Pauses.*

Sir Geo. Ay, pr'ythee consider, for thou shalt find me very much at thy service.

Patch. Suppose, sir, the lady should be in love with you?

Sir Geo. Oh! I'll return the obligation in a moment.

Patch. And marry her?

Sir Geo. Ha, ha, ha! that's not the way to love her, child.

Mir. If he discovers me I shall die——Which way shall I escape?——let me see. [*Pauses.*

Sir Geo. Well, madam——

Mir. I have it——Sir George, 'tis fit you should allow something; if you'll excuse my face, and turn your back, (if you look upon me I shall sink, even mask'd as I am) I will confess why I have engaged you so often, who I am, and where I live.

Sir Geo. Well, to shew you I'm a man of honour, I accept the conditions: let me but once know those, and the face won't be long a secret to me.

Patch. What mean you, madam?

Mir. To get off.

Sir Geo. 'Tis something indecent to turn one's back upon a lady; but you command and I obey. [*Turns his back.*] Come, madam, begin—

Mir. First, then, it was my unhappy lot to see you at Paris, [*Draws back a little way, and speaks*] at a ball upon a birth-day; your shape and air charm'd my eyes, your wit and complaisance my soul, and from that fatal night I loved you.

[*Drawing back.*

And when you left the place, grief seiz'd me so,
Nor rest my heart, nor sleep my eyes could know;
Last I resolved a hazardous point to try,
And quit the place in search of liberty. [*Exeunt.*

Sir Geo. Excellent—I hope she's handsome—Well, now, madam, to the two other things, your name, and where you live——I am a gentleman, and this confession will not be lost upon me—Nay, pr'ythee don't weep, but go on, for I find my heart melts in thy behalf—Speak quickly, or I shall turn about——Not yet—Poor lady! she expects I should comfort her, and, to do her justice, she has said enough to encourage me. [*Turns about.*] Ha! gone! the devil! jilted! Why, what a tale has she invented—of Paris, balls, and birth-days!—'Egad, I'd give ten guineas to know who the gipsey is—A curse of my folly! I deserve to lose her.—What woman can forgive a man that turns his back?

The bold and resolute in love and war
To conquer take the right and swiftest way;
The boldest lover soonest gains the fair,
As courage makes the rudest force obey:
Take no denial, and the dames adore ye;
Closely pursue them, and they fall before ye.

[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Enter Sir FRANCIS GRIPE *and* MIRANDA.

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Mir. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Oh, I shall die with laughing—the most romantic adventure—Ha, ha, ha! What does the odious young fop mean? A hundred pieces to talk ten minutes with me! ha, ha, ha, ha!

Sir Fran. And I am to be by too, there's the jest: adad, if it had been in private, I should not have car'd to trust the young dog.

Mir. Indeed and indeed but you might, Gardy—Now, methinks, there's nobody handsomer than you: so neat, so clean, so good-humour'd, and so loving—

Sir Fran. Pretty rogue, pretty rogue! and so thou shalt find me, if thou dost prefer thy Gardy before these caperers of the age: thou shalt outshine the queen's box on an opera night; thou

shalt be the envy of the ring, (for I will carry thee to Hyde Park) and thy equipage shall surpass the——what d'ye call 'em ambassador's.

Mir. Nay, I am sure the discreet part of my sex will envy me more for the inside furniture, when you are in it, than my outside equipage.

Sir Fran. A cunning baggage, i'faith, thou art, and a wise one too! and to shew thee that thou hast not chose amiss, I'll this moment disinherit my son, and settle my whole estate upon thee.

Mir. There's an old rogue now. [*Aside.*] No, Gardy, I would not have your name to be so black in the world—You know my father's will runs, that I am not to possess my estate, without your consent, till I am five-and-twenty; you shall only abate the odd seven years, and make me mistress of my estate to-day, and I'll make you master of my person to-morrow.

Sir Fran. Humph! that may not be safe—No, Chargy, I'll settle it upon thee for pin-money, and that will be every bit as well, thou know'st.

Mir. Unconscionable old wretch! bribe me with my own money!—Which way shall I get out of his hands. [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Well, what art thou thinking on, my dear, ha? How to banter Sir George?

Mir. I must not pretend to banter; he knows my tongue too well. [*Aside.*] No, Gardy, I have thought of a way will confound him more than all I could say, if I should talk to him seven years.

Sir Fran. How's that? Oh! I'm transported, I'm ravish'd, I'm mad——

Mir. It would make you mad if you knew all. [*Aside.*] I'll not answer him a word, but be dumb to all he says.

Sir Fran. Dumb! good; ha, ha, ha! Excellent! ha, ha, ha, ha! I think I have you now, Sir George. Dumb! he'll go distracted—well, she's the wittiest rogue.—Ha, ha! dumb! I cann't but laugh, ha, ha! to think how damn'd mad he'll be when he finds he has given his money away for a dumb show; ha, ha, ha!

Mir. Nay, Gardy, if he did but know my thoughts of him, it would make him ten times madder; ha, ha, ha, ha!

Sir Fran. Ay, so it would, Chargy, to hold him in such derision, to scorn to answer him, to be dumb! ha, ha, ha!

Enter CHARLES.

Sir Fran. How now, sirrah! who let you in?

Cha. My necessities, sir.

Sir Fran. Your necessities are very impertinent, and ought to have sent before they enter'd.

Cha. Sir, I knew 'twas a word would gain admittance no where.

Sir Fran. Then, sirrah, how durst you rudely thrust that upon your father, which nobody else would admit?

Cha. Sure the name of a son is a sufficient plea. I ask this lady's pardon if I have intruded.

Sir Fran. Ay, ay, ask her pardon and her blessing too, if you expect any thing from me.

Mir. I believe yours, Sir Francis, in a purse of guineas, would be more material. Your son may have business with you; I'll retire.

Sir Fran. I guess his business, but I'll dispatch him; I expect the knight every minute: you'll be in readiness?

Mir. Certainly; my expectation is more upon the wing than yours, old gentleman. [*Exit.*

Sir Fran. Well, sir.

Cha. Nay, it is very ill, sir; my circumstances are, I'm sure.

Sir Fran. And what's that to me, sir? your management should have made them better.

Cha. If you please to entrust me with the management of my estate, I shall endeavour it, sir.

Sir Fran. What, to set upon a card, and buy a lady's favour at the price of a thousand pieces; to rig out an equipage for a wench, or by your carelessness to enrich your steward, to fine for sheriff, or put up for a parliament man?

Cha. I hope I should not spend it this way: however, I ask only for what my uncle left me; yours you may dispose of as you please, sir.

Sir Fran. That I shall, out of your reach, I assure you, sir. Adad, these young fellows think old men get estates for nothing but them to squander away in dicing, wenching, drinking, dressing, and so forth.

Cha. I think I was born a gentleman, sir; I'm sure my uncle bred me like one.

Sir Fran. From which you would infer, sir, that gaming, whoring, and the pox are requisites for a gentleman.

Cha. Monstrous! when I would ask him only for a support, he falls into these unmannerly reproaches. I must, though against my will, employ invention, and by stratagem relieve myself. [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Sirrah, what is it you mutter, sirrah? ha! [*Holds up his cane.*] I say you sha'n't have a groat out of my hands till I please——and may be I'll never please; and what's that to you?

Cha. Nay, to be robb'd, or have one's throat cut, is not much——

Sir Fran. What's that, sirrah? would you rob me or cut my throat, ye rogue?

Cha. Heaven forbid, sir!—I said no such thing.

Sir Fran. Mercy on me! what a plague it is to have a son of one-and-twenty, who wants to elbow one out of one's life, to edge himself into the estate!

Enter MARPLOT.

Mar. Egad, he's here—I was afraid I had lost him: his secret could not be with his father: his wants are public there.—Guardian, your servant—O, Charles, are you there? I know by that sorrowful countenance of thine the old man's fist is as close as his strong box—But I'll help thee.

Sir Fran. So! here's another extravagant coxcomb, that will spend his fortune before he comes to't; but he shall pay swinging interest, and so let the fool go on.—Well, what, does necessity bring you too, sir?

Mar. You have hit it, guardian——I want a hundred pounds.

Sir Fran. For what?

Mar. Pogh! for a hundred things; I cann't for my life tell you for what.

Cha. Sir, I suppose I have received all the answer I am like to have.

Mar. Oh, the devil! if he gets out before me I shall lose him again.

Sir Fran. Ay, sir, and you may be marching as soon as you please—I must see a change in your temper, ere you find one in mine.

Mar. Pray, sir, dispatch me; the money, sir! I'm in mighty haste.

Sir Fran. Fool, take this and go to the cashier. I sha'n't be long plagued with thee.

[*Gives him a note.*

Mar. Devil take the cashier! I shall certainly have Charles gone before I come back.

[*Runs out.*

Cha. Well, sir, I take my leave—But remember you expose an only son to all the miseries of wretched poverty, which too often lays the plan for scenes of mischief.

Sir Fran. Stay, Charles! I have a sudden thought come into my head may prove to thy advantage.

Cha. Ha! does he relent?

Sir Fran. My lady Wrinkle, worth forty thousand pounds, sets up for a handsome young husband; she prais'd thee t'other day; though the match-makers can get twenty guineas for a sight of her, I can introduce thee for nothing.

Cha. My lady Wrinkle, sir! why, she has but one eye.

Sir Fran. Then she'll see but half your extravagance, sir.

Cha. Condemn me to such a piece of deformity! a toothless, dirty, wry-neck'd, hunch-back'd hag!

Sir Fran. Hunch-back'd! so much the better! then she has a rest for her misfortunes, for thou wilt load her swingingly. Now, I warrant you think this is no offer of a father; forty thousand pounds is nothing with you.

Cha. Yes, sir, I think it is too much; a young beautiful woman with half the money would be more agreeable.—I thank you, sir; but you chuse better for yourself I find.

Sir Fran. Out of my doors, you dog! you pretend to meddle with my marriage, sirrah!

Cha. Sir, I obey; but—

Sir Fran. But me no buts—be gone, sir! dare to ask me for money again——refuse forty thousand pounds! Out of my doors, I say, without reply. [*Exit* CHARLES.

Enter MARPLOT, *running.*

Mar. Ha! gone! is Charles gone, Gardy?

Sir Fran. Yes, and I desire your wise worship to walk after him.

Mar. Nay, 'egad, I shall run, I tell you that. A pox of the cashier for detaining me so long! Where the devil shall I find him now? I shall certainly lose this secret, and I had rather by half lose my money——Where shall I find him now ——D'ye know where Charles is gone, Gardy?

Sir Fran. Gone to the devil, and you may go after him.

Mar. Ay, that I will as fast as I can. [*Going, returns.*] Have you any commands there, Gardy? [*Exit.*

Sir Fran. What, is the fellow distracted?

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir George Airy inquires for you, sir.

Sir Fran. Desire Sir George to walk up.—— Now for a trial of skill that will make me happy, and him a fool. Ha, ha, ha! In my mind, he looks like an ass already.

Enter Sir GEORGE.

Well, Sir George, do you hold in the same mind, or would you capitulate? ha, ha, ha! Look, here are the guineas; [*Chinks them*] ha, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. Not if they were twice the sum, Sir Francis; therefore be brief, call in the lady, and take your post.

Sir Fran. Agreed.—Miranda! [*Exit.*

Sir Geo. If she's a woman, and not seduc'd by witchcraft to this old rogue, I'll make his heart ache; for, if she has but one grain of inclination about her, I'll vary a thousand shapes but find it.

Enter MIRANDA *and Sir* FRANCIS.

Sir Fran. There, Sir George, try your fortune. [*Takes out his watch.*

Sir Geo. So from the eastern chambers breaks the sun, dispels the clouds, and gilds the vales below. [*Salutes her.*

Sir Fran. Hold, sir; kissing was not in our agreement.

Sir Geo. Oh! that's by way of prologue. Pr'y-thee, old Mammon, to thy post.

Sir Fran. Well, young Timon, 'tis now four exactly; ten minutes, remember, is your utmost limit; not a minute more.

[*Retires to the bottom of the stage.*

Sir Geo. Madam, whether you'll excuse or blame my love, the author of this rash proceeding, depends upon your pleasure, as also the life of your admirer; your sparkling eyes speak a heart susceptible of love, your vivacity a soul too delicate to admit the embraces of decayed mortality.

Mir. [*Aside.*] Oh! that I durst speak——

Sir Geo. Shake off this tyrant guardian's yoke; assume yourself, and dash his bold aspiring hopes. The deity of his desires is avarice, a heretic in love, and ought to be banish'd by the queen of beauty. See, madam, a faithful servant kneels, and begs to be admitted in the number of your slaves.

[MIRANDA *gives him her hand to raise him.*

Sir Fran. I wish I could hear what he says now. [*Running up.*] Hold, hold, hold! no palming, that's contrary to articles———

Sir Geo. 'Sdeath, sir, keep your distance, or I'll write another article in your guts.

[*Lays his hand to his sword.*

Sir Fran. [*Going back.*] A bloody-minded fellow.

Sir Geo. Not answer me! perhaps she thinks

my address too grave: I'll be more free—Can you be so unconscionable, madam, to let me say all these fine things to you without one single compliment in return? View me well; am I not a proper handsome fellow, ha! Can you prefer that old, dry, wither'd, sapless log of sixty-five to the vigorous, gay, sprightly lover of twenty-four? With snoring only he'll awake thee, but I with ravishing delight will make thy senses dance in concert with the joyful minutes—Ha! not yet! Sure, she's dumb—Thus would I steal and touch thy beauteous hand, [*Takes hold of her hand.*] 'till by degrees I reach'd thy snowy breasts, then ravish kisses thus. [*Embraces her with ecstacy.*

Mir. [*Struggles, and flings from him.*] Oh, heavens! I shall not be able to contain myself.

[*Aside.*

Sir Fran. [*Running up with his watch in his hand.*] Sure she did not speak to him——There's five of the ten minutes gone, Sir George—Adad, I don't like those close conferences——

Sir Geo. More interruptions—you will have it, sir! [*Lays his hand to his sword.*

Sir Fran. [*Going back.*] No, no: you sha'n't have her neither. [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Dumb still—sure this old dog has enjoin'd her silence. I'll try another way—I must conclude, madam, that in compliance to your guardian's humour you refuse to answer me. Consider the injustice of his injunction.—Madam, these few minutes cost me a hundred pounds—and would you answer me, I could purchase the whole day so. However, madam, you must give me leave to make the best interpretation I can for my money, and take the indication of your silence for the secret liking of my person; therefore, madam, I will instruct you how to keep your word inviolate to Sir Francis, and yet answer me to every question; as, for example, when I ask any thing to which you would reply in the affirmative, gently nod your head—thus, [*Nods*] and when in the negative, thus, [*Shakes his head*] and in the doubtful, a tender sigh, thus. [*Sighs.*]

Mir. How every action charms me—but I'll fit him for signs, I warrant him. [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha! poor Sir George! ha, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. Was it by his desire that you are dumb, madam, to all I can say? [MIRANDA *nods.*] Very well! she's tractable I find—And is it possible that you can love him? [MIRANDA *nods.*] Miraculous! Pardon the bluntness of my questions, for my time is short. May I not hope to supplant him in your esteem? [MIRANDA *sighs.*] Good! she answers me as I could wish.—You'll not consent to marry him then? [MIRANDA *sighs.*] How! Doubtful in that?—Undone again—Humph! but that may proceed from his power to keep her out of her estate 'till twenty-five: I'll try that—Come, madam, I cannot think you hesitate in this affair out of any motive but your fortune—let him keep it 'till those few years are expired; make me happy with your person, let him enjoy your wealth.—[MIRANDA *holds up her hands.*] Why, what sign is that now? Nay, nay, madam, except you observe my lesson, I cannot understand your meaning.

Sir Fran. What a vengeance! are they talking by signs? 'ad, I may be fool'd here. What do you mean, Sir George?

Sir Geo. To cut your throat, if you dare mutter another syllable.

Sir Fran. 'Od, I wish he were fairly out of my house!

Sir Geo. Pray, madam, will you answer me to the purpose? [MIRANDA *shakes her head, and points to Sir* FRANCIS.] What does she mean? She won't answer me to the purpose, or is she afraid yon old cuff should understand her signs? ——ay, it must be that. I perceive, madam, you are too apprehensive of the promise you have made to follow my rules, therefore I'll suppose your mind, and answer for you.——First, for myself, madam; that I am in love with you is an infallible truth. Now for you. [*Turns on her side.*] Indeed, sir! and may I believe it?——As certainly, madam, as that 'tis day-light, or that I die if you persist in silence. Bless me with the music of your voice, and raise my spirits to their proper heaven. Thus low let me entreat ere I'm oblig'd to quit this place; grant me some token of a favourable reception, to keep my hopes alive. [*Arises hastily, and turns on her side.*] Rise, sir, and since my guardian's presence will not allow me privilege of tongue, read that, and rest assured you are not indifferent to me. [*Offers her a letter, she strikes it down.*] Ha, right woman! but no matter; I'll go on.

Sir Fran. Ha! what's that? a letter!——Ha, ha, ha! thou art baulk'd.

Mir. The best assurance I ever saw——

[*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Ha! a letter! oh! let me kiss it with the same raptures that I would do the dear hand that touch'd it. [*Opens it.*] Now, for a quick fancy, and a long extempore—What's here? [*Reads.*] Dear Sir George! this virgin muse I consecrate to you, which, when it has receiv'd the addition of your voice, 'twill charm me into a desire of liberty to love, which you, and only you, can fix.—My angel! oh, you transport me! [*Kisses the letter.*] And see the power of your command: the god of love has set the verse already, the flowing numbers dance into a tune, and I'm inspir'd with a voice to sing it.

Mir. I'm sure thou'rt inspired with impudence enough. [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Great love inspire him;
Say I admire him.
Give me the lover
That can discover
Secret devotion
From silent motion;
Then don't betray me,
But hence convey me.

[*Sir* GEO. *taking hold of* MIRAN.] With all my heart; this moment let's retire.

[*Sir* FRANCIS *coming up hastily.*

Sir Fran. The time is expir'd, sir, and you must take your leave. There, my girl, there's

the hundred pounds which thou hast won. Go, I'll be with you presently; ha, ha, ha, ha!

[*Exit* MIRANDA.

Sir Geo. Adsheart, madam, you won't leave me just in the nick, will you?

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha! she has nick'd you, Sir George, I think; ha, ha, ha! Have you any more hundred pounds to throw away upon courtship? ha, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. He, he, he, he! A curse of your fleering jests!—Yet, however ill I succeed, I'll venture the same wager she does not value thee a spoonful of snuff—nay, more, though you enjoin'd her silence to me, you'll never make her speak to the purpose with yourself.

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha! Did I not tell thee thou wouldst repent thy money? Did I not say she hated young fellows? ha, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. And I'm positive she's not in love with age.

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha! no matter for that; ha, ha! She's not taken with your youth, nor your rhetoric to boot; ha, ha!

Sir Geo. Whate'er her reasons are for disliking of me, I am certain she can be taken with nothing about thee.

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha! how he swells with envy—Poor man! poor man—ha, ha, ha! I must beg your pardon, Sir George; Miranda will be impatient to have her share of mirth. Verily, we shall laugh at thee most egregiously; ha, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. With all my heart, faith——I shall laugh in my turn too—for if you dare marry her, old Belzebub, you will be cuckolded most egregiously: remember that, and tremble———

She that to age her beauteous self resigns,
Shews witty management for close designs;
Then if thou'rt grac'd with fair Miranda's bed,
Actæon's horns she means shall crown thy head.

[*Exit.*

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha! he is mad.

These fluttering fops imagine they can wind,
Turn and decoy to love all woman-kind;
But here's a proof of wisdom in my charge,
Old men are constant, young men live at large.
The frugal hand can bills at sight defray,
When he that lavish is has naught to pay. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to Sir* JEALOUS TRAFFICK'S *House.*

Enter Sir JEALOUS, ISABINDA, *and* PATCH *following.*

Sir Jeal. What, in the balcony again, notwithstanding my positive commands to the contrary?—Why don't you write a bill on your forehead to shew passengers there's something to be let?——

Isab. What harm can there be in a little fresh air, sir?

Sir Jeal. Is your constitution so hot, mistress, that it wants cooling, ha? Apply the virtuous Spanish rules; banish your taste and thoughts of flesh, feed upon roots, and quench your thirst with water.

Isab. That and a close room would certainly make me die of the vapours.

Sir Jeal. No, mistress, 'tis your high-fed, lusty, rambling, rampant ladies—that are troubled with the vapours: 'tis your ratafia, persico, cinnamon, citron, and spirit of clara, cause such swimming in the brain, that carries many a guinea full tide to the doctor: but you are not to be bred this way, no galloping abroad, no receiving visits at home, for in our loose country the women are as dangerous as the men.

Patch. So I told her, sir, and that it was not decent to be seen in a balcony——but she threatened to slap my chops, and told me I was her servant, not her governess.

Sir Jeal. Did she so? but I'll make her to know that you are her duenna. Oh, that incomparable custom of Spain! Why, here's no depending upon old women in my country—for they are as wanton at eighty as a girl of eighteen, and a man may as safely trust to Asgil's translation as to his great grandmother's not marrying again.

Isab. Or to the Spanish ladies' veils and duennas for the safeguard of their honour.

Sir Jeal. Dare to ridicule the cautious conduct of that wise nation, and I'll have you lock'd up this fortnight without a peep-hole.

Isab. If we had but the ghostly helps in England which they have in Spain, I might deceive you if you did—Sir, 'tis not the restraint, but the innate principle, secures the reputation and honour of our sex.——Let me tell you, sir, confinement sharpens the invention, as want of sight strengthens the other senses, and is often more pernicious than the recreation that innocent liberty allows.

Sir Jeal. Say you so, mistress! who the devil taught you the art of reasoning? I assure you, they must have a greater faith than I pretend to, that can think any woman innocent who requires liberty; therefore, Patch, to your charge I give her; lock her up till I come back from 'Change. I shall have some sauntering coxcomb, with nothing but a red coat and a feather, think by leaping into her arms to leap into my estate—but I'll prevent them; she shall be only Signior Babinetto's.

Patch. Really, sir, I wish you would employ any body else in this affair; I lead a life like a dog with obeying your commands. Come, madam, will you please to be locked up?

Isab. Ay, to enjoy more freedom than he is aware of. [*Aside.*] [*Exit with* PATCH.

Sir Jeal. I believe this wench is very true to my interest: I am happy I met with her, if I can but keep my daughter from being blown up till Signior Babinetto arrives, who shall marry her as soon as he comes, and carry her to Spain as soon as he has married her. She has a pregnant wit, and I'd no more have her an English wife than the grand signior's mistress. [*Exit.*

Enter WHISPER.

Whisp. So, I saw Sir Jealous go out: where shall I find Mrs Patch now?

Enter PATCH.

Patch. Oh, Mr Whisper! my lady saw you out of the window, and order'd me to bid you fly and let your master know she's now alone.

Whisp. Hush! speak softly! I go, I go! But hark ye, Mrs Patch, shall not you and I have a little confabulation, when my master and your lady are engaged?

Patch. Ay, ay; farewell.

[*Goes in and shuts the door.*

Re-enter Sir JEALOUS TRAFFICK, *meeting* WHISPER.

Sir Jeal. Sure, whilst I was talking with Mr Tradewell, I heard my door clap. [*Seeing* WHISPER.] Ha! a man lurking about my house! Who do you want there, sir?

Whisp. Want—want? a pox! Sir Jealous! What must I say now?

Sir Jeal. Ay, want! Have you a letter or message for any body there?—O' my conscience this is some he-bawd——

Whisp. Letter or message, sir?

Sir Jeal. Ay, letter or message, sir?

Whisp. No, not I, sir.

Sir Jeal. Sirrah, sirrah! I'll have you set in the stocks if you don't tell your business immediately.

Whisp. Nay, sir, my business—is no great matter of business neither, and yet 'tis business of consequence too.

Sir Jeal. Sirrah, don't trifle with me.

Whisp. Trifle, sir! have you found him, sir?

Sir Jeal. Found what, you rascal?

Whisp. Why, Trifle is the very lap-dog my lady lost, sir; I fancy'd I saw him run into this house. I'm glad you have him—sir; my lady will be overjoy'd that I have found him.

Sir Jeal. Who is your lady, friend?

Whisp. My lady Lovepuppy, sir.

Sir Jeal. My lady Lovepuppy, sir! then pr'ythee carry thyself to her, for I know of no other whelp that belongs to her; and let me catch you no more puppy-hunting about my doors, lest I have you press'd into the service, sirrah.

Whisp. By no means, sir—Your humble servant. I must watch whether he goes or no before I can tell my master. [*Exit.*

Sir Jeal. This fellow has the officious leer of a pimp, and I half suspect a design; but I'll be upon them before they think on me, I warrant 'em. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—CHARLES'S *Lodgings.*

Enter CHARLES *and* MARPLOT.

Cha. Honest Marplot! I thank thee for this supply. I expect my lawyer with a thousand pounds I have ordered him to take up, and then you shall be repaid.

Mar. Pho, pho! no more of that. Here comes Sir George Airy,

Enter Sir GEORGE.

cursedly out of humour at his disappointment See how he looks! ha, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. Ah, Charles! I am so humbled in my pretensions to plots upon women, that I believe I shall never have courage enough to attempt a chamber-maid again ——I'll tell thee ——

Cha. Ha, ha! I'll spare you the relation by telling you—Impatient to know your business with my father, when I saw you enter, I slipt back into the next room, where I overheard every syllable.

Mar. Did you, Charles? I wish I had been with you.

Sir Geo. That I said——but I'll be hang'd if you heard her answer——But pr'ythee tell me, Charles, is she a fool?

Cha. I never suspected her for one; but Marplot can inform you better, if you allow him a judge.

Mar. A fool! I'll justify she has more wit than all the rest of her sex put together. Why, she'll rally me till I ha'n't a word to say for myself.

Cha. A mighty proof of her wit, truly—

Mar. There must be some trick in't, Sir George: 'egad, I'll find it out, if it cost me the sum you paid for't.

Sir Geo. Do, and command me——

Mar. Enough: let me alone to trace a secret——

Enter WHISPER, *and speaks aside to his Master.*

The devil! he here again? damn that fellow, he never speaks out. Is this the same or a new secret?—You may speak out, here are none but friends.

Cha. Pardon me, Marplot, 'tis a secret.

Mar. A secret! ay, or, ecod, I would not give a farthing for it. Sir George, won't you ask Charles what news Whisper brings?

Sir Geo. Not I, sir; I suppose it does not relate to me.

Mar. Lord, Lord! how little curiosity some people have! Now my chief pleasure is in knowing every body's business.

Sir Geo. I fancy, Charles, thou hast some engagement upon thy hands?

Mar. Have you, Charles?

Sir Geo. I have a little business too.

Mar. Have you, Sir George?

Sir Geo. Marplot, if it falls in your way to bring me any intelligence from Miranda, you'll find me at the Thatch'd House at six——

Mar. You do me much honour.

Cha. You guess right, Sir George; wish me success.

Sir Geo. Better than attended me. Adieu.

[*Exit.*

Cha. Marplot, you must excuse me——

Mar. Nay, nay; what need of any excuse amongst friends? I'll go with you.

Cha. Indeed you must not.

Mar. No? then I suppose 'tis a duel, and I will go to secure you.

Cha. Well, but 'tis no duel, consequently no danger; therefore, pr'ythee be answer'd.

Mar. What, is't a mistress then?—Mum—you know I can be silent upon occasion.

Cha. I wish you could be civil too: I tell you, you neither must nor shall go with me. Farewell. [*Exit.*

Mar. Why then—I must and will follow you. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter CHARLES.

Cha. Well, here's the house which holds the lovely prize, quiet and serene: here no noisy footmen throng to tell the world that beauty dwells within; no ceremonious visit makes the lover wait, no rival to give my heart a pang. Who would not scale the window at midnight, without fear of the jealous father's pistol, rather than fill up the train of a coquette, where every minute he is jostled out of place! [*Knocks softly.*] Mrs Patch, Mrs Patch!

Enter PATCH.

Patch. Oh, are you come, sir? All's safe.

Cha. So in, in then. [*Exeunt.*

Enter MARPLOT.

Mar. There he goes! Who the devil lives here? except I can find out that, I am as far from knowing his business as ever. Gad, I'll watch; it may be a bawdy-house, and he may have his throat cut. If there should be any mischief, I can make oath he went in. Well, Charles, in spite of your endeavours to keep me out of the secret, I may save your life, for aught I know. At that corner I'll plant myself; there I shall see whoever goes in or comes out. Gad, I love discoveries. [*Exit.*

SCENE II—*Draws, and discovers* CHARLES, ISABINDA, *and* PATCH.

Isab. Patch, look out sharp: have a care of dad.

Patch. I warrant you.

Isab. Well, sir, if I may judge your love by your courage, I ought to believe you sincere, for you venture into the lion's den when you come to see me.

Cha. If you'd consent whilst the furious beast is abroad, I'd free you from the reach of his paws.

Isab. That would be but to avoid one danger by running into another, like poor wretches who fly the burning ship, and meet their fate in the water. Come, come, Charles, I fear if I consult my reason, confinement and plenty is better than liberty and starving. I know you would make the frolic pleasing for a little time, by saying and doing a world of tender things; but when our small substance is exhausted, and a thousand requisites for life are wanting, Love, who rarely dwells with Poverty, would also fail us.

Cha. Faith, I fancy not; methinks my heart has laid up a stock will last for life, to back which, I have taken a thousand pounds upon my uncle's estate: that, surely, will support us till one of our fathers relent.

Isab. There's no trusting to that, my friend; I doubt your father will carry his humour to the grave, and mine till he sees me settled in Spain.

Cha. And can you then cruelly resolve to stay till that cursed Don arrives, and suffer that youth, beauty, fire, and wit, to be sacrificed to the arms of a dull Spaniard, to be immured, and forbid the sight of any thing that's human?

Isab. No; when it comes to that extremity, and no stratagem can relieve us, thou shalt list for a soldier, and I'll carry thy knapsack after thee.

Cha. Bravely resolved! the world cannot be more savage than our parents, and fortune generally assists the bold, therefore consent now: why should she put it to a future hazard? Who knows when we shall have another opportunity?

Isab. Oh, you have your ladder of ropes, I suppose, and the closet window stands just where it did; and, if you ha'n't forgot to write in characters, Patch will find a way for our assignations. Thus much of the Spanish contrivance my father's severity has taught me, I thank him: though I hate the nation, I admire their management in these affairs.

Enter PATCH.

Patch. Oh, madam! I see my master coming up the street.

Cha. Oh, the devil! would I had my ladder now! I thought you had not expected him till night. Why, why, why, why, what shall I do, madam?

Isab. Oh! for Heaven's sake don't go that way; you'll meet him full in the teeth. Oh, unlucky moment!

Cha. Adsheart! can you shut me into no cupboard, nor ram me into a chest, ha?

Patch. Impossible, sir, he searches every hole in the house.

Isab. Undone for ever! if he sees you, I shall never see you more.

Patch. I have thought on it: run you to your chamber, madam; and, sir, come you along with me; I'm certain you may easily get down from the balcony.

Cha. My life! adieu—Lead on, guide.

[*Exeunt* PATCH *and* CHARLES.

Isab. Heav'n preserve him! [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to the Street.*

Enter Sir JEALOUS, *with* MARPLOT *behind him.*

Sir Jeal. I don't know what's the matter, but I have a strong suspicion all is not right within; that fellow's sauntering about my door, and his tale of a puppy, had the face of a lie, methought. By St Iago, if I should find a man in the house, I'd make mince meat of him—

Mar. Mince meat! Ah, poor Charles, how I sweat for thee! 'Egad, he's old—I fancy I might bully him, and make Charles have an opinion of my courage. 'Egad, I'll pluck up, and have a touch with him.

Sir Jeal. My own key shall let me in; I'll give them no warning. [*Feeling for his key.*

Mar. What's that you say, sir?

[*Going up to Sir* JEAL.

Sir Jeal. What's that to you, sir?

[*Turns quick upon him.*

Mar. Yes, 'tis to me, sir, for the gentleman you threaten is a very honest gentleman. Look to't, for if he comes not as safe out of your house as he went in——

Sir Jeal. What, is he in then?

Mar. Yes, sir, he is in then; and I say if he does not come out, I have half-a-dozen myrmidons hard by shall beat your house about your ears.

Sir Jeal. Ah! a combination to undo me—— I'll myrmidon you, ye dog you——Thieves! thieves!

[*Beats* MARPLOT *all the while he cries thieves.*

Mar. Murder, murder! I was not in your house, sir.

Enter Servant.

Serv. What's the matter, sir?

Sir Jeal. The matter, rascal! you have let a man into my house, but I'll flay him alive. Follow me; I'll not leave a mouse-hole unsearched. If I find him, by St Iago, I'll equip him for the opera. [*Exeunt Sir* JEAL. *and Serv.*

Mar. A deuce of his cane! there's no trusting to age!—What shall I do to relieve Charles? 'egad, I'll raise the neighbourhood.——Murder! murder!—[CHARLES *drops down upon him from the balcony.*] Charles, faith, I'm glad to see thee safe out with all my heart!

Cha. A pox of your bawling! how the devil came you here?

Mar. 'Egad, it's very well for you that I was here; I have done you a piece of service: I told the old thunderbolt that the gentleman that was gone in was—

Cha. Was it you that told him, sir? [*Laying hold of him.*] 'Sdeath! I could crush thee into atoms. [*Exit* CHARLES.

Mar. What! will you choke me for my kindness?——Will my inquiring soul never leave searching into other people's affairs till it gets squeezed out of my body! I dare not follow him now for my blood, he's in such a passion.—I'll to Miranda; if I can discover aught that may oblige Sir George, it may be a means to reconcile me again to Charles.

Sir Jeal. [*Within.*] Look about! search! find him out!

Mar. Oh, the devil! there's old Crabstick again. [*Exit.*

Enter Sir JEALOUS *and his Servants.*

Sir Jeal. Are you sure you have searched every where?

Serv. Yes, from the top of the house to the bottom.

Sir Jeal. Under the beds and over the beds?

Serv. Yes, and in them too, but found nobody, sir.

Sir Jeal. Why, what could this rogue mean?

Enter ISABINDA *and* PATCH.

Patch. Take courage, madam, I saw him safe out. [*Aside to* ISAB.

Isab. Bless me! what's the matter, sir?

Sir Jeal. You know best—Pray where's the man that was here just now?

Isab. What man, sir? I saw none.

Patch. Nor I, by the trust you repose in me. Do you think I would let a man come within these doors when you are absent?

Sir Jeal. Ah, Patch! she may be too cunning for thy honesty: the very scout that he had set to give warning discovered it to me—and threatened me with half-a-dozen myrmidons——but I think I mauled the villain. These afflictions you draw upon me, mistress!

Isab. Pardon me, sir, 'tis your own ridiculous humour draws you into these vexations, and gives every fool pretence to banter you.

Sir Jeal. No, 'tis your idle conduct, your coquettish flirting in the balcony—Oh! with what joy shall I resign thee into the arms of Don Diego Babinetto!

Isab. And with what industry shall I avoid him! [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. Certainly that rogue had a message from somebody or other, but, being baulked by my coming, popped that sham upon me. Come along, ye sots, let's see if we can find the dog again. Patch, lock her up, d'ye hear? [*Exit.*

Patch. Yes, sir—Ay, walk till your heels ache, you'll find nobody, I promise you.

Isab. Who could that scout be which he talks of?

Patch. Nay, I cann't imagine, without it was Whisper.

Isab. Well, dear Patch! let's employ all our thoughts how to escape this horrid Don Diego; my very heart sinks at his terrible name.

Patch. Fear not, madam; Don Carlo shall be

the man, or I'll lose the reputation of contriving, and then what's a chamber-maid good for?

Isab. Say'st thou so, my girl? then
Let dad be jealous, multiply his cares;
Whilst love instructs me to avoid the snares,
I'll, spite of all his Spanish caution, show
How much for love a British maid can do.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*Sir* FRANCIS GRIPE'S *House.*

Enter Sir FRANCIS *and* MIRANDA *meeting.*

Mir. Well, Gardy, how did I perform the dumb scene?

Sir Fran. To admiration—Thou dear little rogue! let me buss thee for it: nay, adad, I will, Chargy, so muzzle, and tuzzle, and hug thee; I will, i'faith, I will. [*Hugging and kissing her.*

Mir. Nay, Gardy, don't be so lavish. Who would ride post when the journey lasts for life?

Sir Fran. Ah wag, ah wag! I'll buss thee again for that. Oh, I'm transported! When, when, my dear! wilt thou convince the world of the happy day? when shall we marry, ha?

Mir. There's nothing wanting but your consent, Sir Francis.

Sir Fran. My consent! what does my charmer mean?

Mir. Nay, 'tis only a whim; but I'll have every thing according to form—therefore when you sign an authentic paper, drawn up by an able lawyer, that I have your leave to marry, the next day makes me yours, Gardy.

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha! a whim indeed! why is it not demonstration I give my leave when I marry thee?

Mir. Not for your reputation, Gardy; the malicious world will be apt to say you trick me into marriage, and so take the merit from my choice: now I will have the act my own, to let the idle fops see how much I prefer a man loaded with years and wisdom.

Sir Fran. Humph! Pr'ythee leave out years, Chargy; I'm not so old, as thou shalt find. Adad, I'm young: there's a caper for ye! [*Jumps.*

Mir. Oh, never excuse it; why, I like you the better for being old—but I shall suspect you don't love me if you refuse me this formality.

Sir Fran. Not love thee, Chargy! Adad, I do love thee better than, than, than, better than—what shall I say? 'egad, better than money; i'faith, I do—

Mir. That's false I'm sure. [*Aside.*] To prove it, do this then.

Sir Fran. Well, I will do it, Chargy, provided I bring a licence at the same time.

Mir. Ay, and a parson too if you please.—Ha, ha, ha! I cann't help laughing to think how all the young coxcombs about town will be mortified when they hear of our marriage.

Sir Fran. So they will, so they will; ha, ha, ha!

Mir. Well, I fancy I shall be so happy with my Gardy—

Sir Fran. If wearing pearls and jewels, or eating gold, as the old saying is, can make thee happy, thou shalt be so, my sweetest, my lovely, my charming, my—verily I know not what to call thee.

Mir. You must know, Gardy, that I am so eager to have this business concluded, that I have employed my woman's brother, who is a lawyer in the Temple, to settle matters just to your liking; you are to give your consent to my marriage, which is to yourself you know: but, mum, you must take no notice of that. So then I will, that is, with your leave, put my writings into his hands; then to-morrow we come slap upon them with a wedding that nobody thought on, by which you seize me and my estate, and I suppose make a bonfire of your own act and deed.

Sir Fran. Nay, but, Chargy, if—

Mir. Nay, Gardy, no ifs.—— Have I refused three northern lords, two British peers, and half a score knights, to have you put in your ifs?

Sir Fran. So thou hast indeed, and I will trust to thy management. 'Od, I'm all of a fire.

Mir. 'Tis a wonder the dry stubble does not blaze.

Enter MARPLOT.

Sir Fran. How now, who sent for you, sir? What, is the hundred pound gone already?

Mar. No, sir; I don't want money now, Gardy.

Sir Fran. No; that's a miracle! but there's one thing you want I'm sure.

Mar. Ay, what's that?

Sir Fran. Manners! What, had I no servants without?

Mar. None that could do my business, guardian, which is at present with this lady.

Mir. With me, Mr Marplot! what is it, I beseech you?

Sir Fran. Ay, sir, what is it? any thing that relates to her may be delivered to me.

Mar. I deny that.

Mir. That's more than I do, sir.

Mar. Indeed, madam! Why then to proceed: Fame says, you know best whether she lies or not, that you and my most conscionable guardian here, designed, contrived, plotted, and agreed, to chouse a very civil, honest, honourable gentleman out of a hundred pounds: Guilty or not?

Mir. That I contrived it!

Mar. Ay, you—you said never a word against it, so far you are guilty.

Sir Fran. Pray, tell that civil, honest, honourable gentleman, that if he has any more such sums to fool away, they shall be received like the last; ha, ha, ha! Choused, quoth-a! But hark ye, let him know at the same time, that if he dare to report I tricked him of it, I shall recommend a lawyer to him shall shew him a trick for twice as much. D'ye hear? tell him that.

Mar. So, and this is the way you use a gentleman, and my friend!

Mir. Is the wretch thy friend?

Mar. The wretch! look ye, madam, don't call names, 'egad, I won't take it.

Mir. Why, you won't beat me, will you? Ha, ha, ha!

Mar. I don't know whether I will or no.

Sir Fran. Sir, I shall make a servant shew you out at the window if you are saucy.

Mar. I am your most humble servant, guardian; I design to go out the same way I came in. I would only ask this lady one question:—Don't you think he's a fine gentleman?

Sir Fran. Who's a fine gentleman?

Mar. Not you, Gardy, not you!—Don't you think in your soul that Sir George Airy is a very fine gentleman?

Mir. He dresses well.

Sir Fran. Which is chiefly owing to his tailor and valet-de-chambre.

Mar. Well, and who is your dress owing to, ha? There's a beau, ma'am—do but look at him!

Sir Fran. Sirrah!

Mir. And if being a beau be a proof of his being a fine gentleman, he may be so.

Mar. He may be so! Why, ma'am, the judicious part of the world allow him wit, courage, gallantry, ay, and economy too, though I think he forfeited that character when he flung away a hundred pounds upon your dumb ladyship.

Sir Fran. Does that gall him? Ha, ha, ha!

Mir. So Sir George, remaining in deep discontent, has sent you, his trusty squire, to utter his complaint. Ha, ha, ha!

Mar. Yes, madam; and you, like a cruel hard-hearted Jew, value it no more—than I would your ladyship, were I Sir George; you, you, you——

Mir. Oh, don't call names: I know you love to be employed, and I'll oblige you, and you shall carry him a message from me.

Mar. According as I like it. What is it?

Mir. Nay, a kind one you may be sure—First, tell him I have chose this gentleman to have and to hold, and so forth.

[*Clapping her hand into Sir* FRANCIS's.

Mar. Much good may do you!

Sir Fran. Oh, the dear rogue! how I dote on her! [*Aside.*

Mir. And advise his impertinence to trouble me no more, for I prefer Sir Francis for a husband before all the fops in the universe.

Mar. Oh Lord, oh Lord! she's bewitch'd, that's certain. Here's a husband for eighteen—here's a tit bit for a young lady—here's a shape, an air, and a grace—here's bones rattling in a leathern bag—[*Turning Sir* FRANCIS *about*] here's buckram and canvas to scrub you to repentance.

Sir Fran. Sirrah, my cane shall teach you repentance presently.

Mar. No, faith, I have felt its twin brother from just such a wither'd hand too lately.

Mir. One thing more:—advise him to keep from the garden-gate on the left hand, for if he dare to saunter there, about the hour of eight, as he us'd to do, he shall be saluted with a pistol, or a blunderbuss.

Sir Fran. Oh, monstrous! Why, Chargy, did he use to come to the garden-gate?

Mir. The gard'ner described just such another man that always watch'd his coming out, and fain would have bribed him for his entrance—Tell him he shall find a warm reception if he comes this night.

Mar. Pistols and blunderbusses! 'Egad, a warm reception indeed! I shall take care to inform him of your kindness, and advise him to keep farther off.

Mir. I hope he will understand my meaning better than to follow your advice. [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Thou hast signed, seal'd, and ta'en possession of my heart for ever, Chargy, ha, ha, ha! and for you, Mr Saucebox, let me have no more of your messages, if ever you design to inherit your estate, gentleman.

Mar. Why, there 'tis now. Sure I shall be out of your clutches one day—Well, guardian, I say no more: but if you be not as arrant a cuckold as e'er drove bargain upon the Exchange, or paid attendance to a court, I am the son of a whetstone; and so your humble servant.

Mir. Mr Marplot, don't forget the message! ha, ha, ha, ha!

Mar. Nang, nang, nang! [*Exit.*

Sir Fran. I am so provok'd—'tis well he's gone.

Mir. Oh, mind him not, Gardy, but let's sign articles, and then——

Sir Fran. And then—Adad, I believe I am metamorphos'd, my pulse beats high, and my blood boils, methinks——

[*Kissing and hugging her.*

Mir. O fie, Gardy! be not so violent: consider the market lasts all the year.—Well; I'll in, and see if the lawyer be come: you'll follow?

[*Exit.*

Sir Fran. Ay, to the world's end, my dear! Well, Frank, thou art a lucky fellow in thy old age to have such a delicate morsel, and thirty thousand pounds in love with thee. I shall be the envy of bachelors, the glory of married men, and the wonder of the town. Some guardians would be glad to compound for part of the estate at dispatching an heiress, but I engross the whole. *O! mihi præteritos referet si Jupiter annos!*

[Exit.

SCENE V.—*Changes to a Tavern, discovers Sir* GEORGE *and* CHARLES *with wine before them, and* WHISPER *waiting.*

Sir Geo. Nay, pr'ythee, don't be grave, Charles: misfortunes will happen. Ha, ha, ha! 'tis some comfort to have a companion in our sufferings.

Cha. I am only apprehensive for Isabinda; her father's humour is implacable; and how far

his jealousy may transport him to her undoing, shocks my soul to think.

Sir Geo. But since you escap'd undiscover'd by him, his rage will quickly lash into a calm, never fear it.

Cha. But who knows what that unlucky dog, Marplot, told him, nor can I imagine what brought him hither: that fellow is ever doing mischief; and yet, to give him his due, he never designs it. This is some blundering adventure wherein he thought to shew his friendship, as he calls it! a curse on him!

Sir Geo. Then you must forgive him. What said he?

Cha. Said! nay, I had more mind to cut his throat, than to hear his excuses.

Sir Geo. Where is he?

Whisp. Sir, I saw him go into Sir Francis Gripe's just now.

Cha. Oh! then he's upon your business, Sir George: a thousand to one but he makes some mistake there too.

Sir Geo. Impossible, without he huffs the lady, and makes love to Sir Francis.

Enter Drawer.

Draw. Mr Marplot is below, gentlemen, and desires to know if he may have leave to wait upon ye.

Cha. How civil the rogue is when he has done a fault!

Sir Geo. Ho! desire him to walk up. Pr'ythee, Charles, throw off this chagrin, and be good company.

Cha. Nay, hang him, I'm not angry with him. Whisper, fetch me pen, ink, and paper.

Whisp. Yes, sir. [*Exit* WHISPER.

Enter MARPLOT.

Cha. Do but mark his sheepish look, Sir George.

Mar. Dear Charles! don't overwhelm a man already under insupportable affliction. I'm sure I always intend to serve my friends, but if my malicious stars deny the happiness, is the fault mine?

Sir Geo. Never mind him, Mr Marplot; he's eat up with spleen. But tell me what says Miranda?

Mar. Says!—nay, we are all undone there too.

Cha. I told you so: nothing prospers that he undertakes.

Mar. Why, can I help her having chose your father for better for worse?

Cha. So; there's another of Fortune's strokes. I suppose I shall be edged out of my estate with twins every year, let who will get 'em.

Sir Geo. What! is the woman really possess'd?

Mar. Yes, with the spirit of contradiction; she rail'd at you most prodigiously.

Sir Geo. That's no ill sign.

Enter WHISPER *with pen, ink, and paper.*

Mar. You'd say it was no good sign, if you knew all.

Sir Geo. Why, pr'ythee?

Mar. Hark'e, Sir George, let me warn you; pursue your old haunt no more; it may be dangerous. [CHARLES *sits down to write.*

Sir Geo. My old haunt! what do you mean?

Mar. Why in short then, since you will have it, Miranda vows if you dare approach the garden-gate at eight o'clock, as you us'd, you shall meet with a warm reception.

Sir Geo. A warm reception!

Mar. Ay, a very warm reception—you shall be saluted with a blunderbuss, sir. These were her very words: nay, she bid me tell you so too.

Sir Geo. Ha! the garden-gate at eight, as I us'd to do! There must be meaning in this. Is there such a gate, Charles?

Mar. Is there such a gate, Charles?

Cha. Yes, yes, it opens into the Park: I suppose her ladyship has made many a scamper through it.

Sir Geo. It must be an assignation then. Ha! my heart springs for joy; 'tis a propitious omen. My dear Marplot! let me embrace thee; thou art my friend, my better angel.

Mar. What do you mean, Sir George?

Sir Geo. No matter what I mean. Here, take a bumper to the garden-gate, you dear rogue you!

Mar. You have reason to be transported, Sir George; I have sav'd your life.

Sir Geo. My life! thou hast sav'd my soul, man. Charles, if thou dost not pledge this health, may'st thou never taste the joys of love.

Cha. Whisper, be sure you take care how you deliver this. [*Gives him the letter.*] Bring me the answer to my lodgings.

Whisp. I warrant you, sir.

Mar. Whither does that letter go? Now dare I not ask for my blood—That fellow knows more secrets than I do. [*Exit* WHISPER.

Cha. Now I'm for you.

Sir Geo. To the garden-gate at the hour of eight, Charles: along; huzza!

Cha. I begin to conceive you.

Mar. That's more than I do, egad—To the garden-gate, huzza! [*Drinks.*] But I hope you design to keep far enough off on't, Sir George.

Sir Geo. Ay, ay, never fear that; she shall see I despise her frowns; let her use the blunderbuss against the next fool; she sha'n't reach me with the smoke I warrant her; ha, ha, ha!

Mar. Ah, Charles! if you could receive a disappointment thus *en cavalier*, one should have some comfort in being beat for you.

Cha. The fool comprehends nothing.

Sir Geo. Nor would I have him. Pr'ythee, take him along with thee.

Cha. Enough.

Sir Geo. I kiss both your hands—And now for the garden-gate.

It's beauty gives the assignation there,
And love too powerful grows t'admit of fear.
[*Exit.*

Cha. Come, you shall go home with me.

Mar. Shall I! and are we friends, Charles?—I am glad of it.

Cha. Come along. [*Exit* CHARLES.

Mar. 'Egad, Charles' asking me to go home with him gives me a shrewd suspicion there's more in the garden-gate than I comprehend. Faith, I'll give him the drop, and away to Gardy's, and find it out. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The outside of Sir* JEALOUS TRAFFICK'S *House;* PATCH *peeping out of the door.*

Enter WHISPER.

Whisp. Ha! Mrs Patch, this is a lucky minute, to find you so readily; my master dies with impatience.

Patch. My lady imagined so, and by her orders I have been scouting this hour in search of you, to inform you that Sir Jealous has invited some friends to supper with him to-night, which gives an opportunity to your master to make use of his ladder of ropes. The closet window shall be open, and Isabinda be ready to receive him. Bid him come immediately.

Whisp. Excellent! he'll not disappoint, I warrant him.—But hold, I have a letter here which I'm to carry an answer to. I cann't think what language the direction is.

Patch. Pho! 'tis no language, but a character which the lovers invented to avert discovery—Ha! I hear my old master coming down stairs: it is impossible you should have an answer: away, and bid him come himself for that. Be gone; we're ruin'd if you're seen, for he has doubled his care since the last accident.

Whisp. I go, I go. [*Exit.*

Patch. There, go you into my pocket. [*Puts it beside, and it falls down.*] Now I'll up the back stairs, lest I meet him—Well, a dexterous chamber-maid is the ladies' best utensil, I say. [*Exit.*

Enter Sir JEALOUS, *with a letter in his hand.*

Sir Jeal. So, this is some comfort: this tells me that Signior Don Diego Babinetto is safely arrived. He shall marry my daughter the minute he comes—Ha, ha! what's here? [*Takes up the letter* PATCH *dropped.*] A letter! I don't know what to make of the superscription. I'll see what's within-side. [*Opens it.*]—Humph—'tis Hebrew I think. What can this mean?—There must be some trick in it. This was certainly design'd for my daughter; but I don't know that she can speak any language but her mother tongue—No matter for that; this may be one of Love's hieroglyphics; and I fancy I saw Patch's tail sweep by: that wench may be a slut, and instead of guarding my honour, betray it. I'll find it out, I'm resolved—Who's there?

Enter Servant.

What answer did you bring from the gentlemen I sent you to invite?

Serv. That they'd all wait on you, sir, as I told you before; but I suppose you forgot it, sir.

Sir Jeal. Did I so, sir? but I sha'n't forget to break your head if any of them come, sir.

Serv. Come, sir! why, did not you send me to desire their company, sir?

Sir Jeal. But I send you now to desire their absence. Say I have something extraordinary fallen out, which calls me abroad contrary to expectation, and ask their pardon; and, d'ye hear, send the butler to me.

Serv. Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

Enter Butler.

Sir Jeal. If this paper has a meaning I'll find it—Lay the cloth in my daughter's chamber, and bid the cook send supper thither presently.

But. Yes, sir.—Hey-day! what's the matter now? [*Exit.*

Sir Jeal. He wants the eyes of Argus that has a young handsome daughter in this town; but my comfort is I shall not be troubled long with her. He that pretends to rule a girl once in her teens, had better be at sea in a storm, and would be in less danger;

For let him do or counsel all he can,
She thinks and dreams of nothing else but man.
[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—ISABINDA'S *Chamber.* ISABINDA *and* PATCH.

Isab. Are you sure nobody saw you speak to Whisper?

Patch. Yes, very sure, madam; but I heard Sir Jealous coming down stairs, so clapt his letter into my pocket. [*Feels for the letter.*

Isab. A letter! give it me quickly.

Patch. Bless me! what's become on't—I'm sure I put it—— [*Searching still.*

Isab. Is it possible thou couldst be so careless?—Oh, I'm undone for ever if it be lost.

Patch. I must have dropt it upon the stairs.—But why are you so much alarm'd? if the worst happens, nobody can read it, madam, nor find out whom it was design'd for.

Isab. If it falls into my father's hands, the very figure of a letter will produce ill consequences. Run and look for it upon the stairs this moment.

Patch. Nay, I'm sure it can be no where else ——[*As she is going out of the door meets the Butler.*] How now, what do you want?

But. My master ordered me to lay the cloth here for supper.

Isab. Ruin'd past redemption— [*Aside.*

Patch. You mistake, sure. What shall we do?

Isab. I thought he expected company to-night —Oh, poor Charles! oh, unfortunate Isabinda!

But. I thought so too, madam; but I suppose he has alter'd his mind. [*Lays the cloth, and exit.*

Isab. The letter is the cause. This heedless action has undone me. Fly and fasten the closet window, which will give Charles notice to retire. Ha! my father! oh, confusion!

Enter Sir JEALOUS.

Sir Jeal. Hold, hold, Patch; whither are you going? I'll have nobody stir out of the room till after supper.

Patch. Sir, I was going to reach your easy chair—oh, wretched accident!

Sir Jeal. I'll have nobody stir out of the room. I don't want my easy chair.

Isab. What will be the event of this? [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. Hark ye, daughter, do you know this hand?

Isab. As I suspected——Hand do you call it, sir? 'tis some school-boy's scrawl.

Patch. Oh, Invention! thou chamber-maid's best friend, assist me!

Sir Jeal. Are you sure you don't understand it?

[PATCH *feels in her bosom and shakes her coats.*

Isab. Do you understand it, sir?

Sir Jeal. I wish I did.

Isab. Thank Heaven you do not. [*Aside.*] Then I know no more of it than you do, indeed, sir.

Patch. Oh Lord, Oh Lord! what have you done, sir? why, the paper is mine; I dropp'd it out of my bosom. [*Snatching it from him.*

Sir Jeal. Ha! yours, mistress?

Isab. What does she mean by owning it?

Patch. Yes, sir, it is.

Sir Jeal. What is it? speak.

Patch. Yes, sir, it is a charm for the tooth-ache—I have worn it these seven years; 'twas given me by an angel, for aught I know, when I was raving with the pain, for nobody knew from whence he came nor whither he went. He charged me never to open it, lest some dire vengeance befal me, and Heaven knows what will be the event. Oh, cruel misfortune! that I should drop it and you should open it—If you had not open'd it—

Isab. Excellent wench! [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. Pox of your charms and whims for me! if that be all 'tis well enough: there, there, burn it, and I warrant you no vengeance will follow.

Patch. So all's right again thus far. [*Aside.*

Isab. I would not lose Patch for the world—I'll take courage a little. [*Aside.*] Is this usage for your daughter, sir? Must my virtue and conduct be suspected for every trifle? You immure me like some dire offender here, and deny me all the recreations which my sex enjoy, and the custom of the country and modesty allow; yet not content with that, you make my confinement more intolerable by your mistrusts and jealousies. Would I were dead, so I were free from this!

Sir Jeal. To-morrow rids you of this tiresome load: Don Diego Babinetto will be here, and then my care ends and his begins.

Isab. Is he come then?—Oh, how shall I avoid this hated marriage? [*Aside.*

Enter Servants with supper.

Sir Jeal. Come, will you sit down?

Isab. I cann't eat, sir.

Patch. No, I dare swear he has given her supper enough. I wish I could get into the closet. [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. Well, if you cann't eat, then give me a song whilst I do.

Isab. I have such a cold I can scarce speak, sir, much less sing. How shall I prevent Charles coming in? [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. I hope you have the use of your fingers, madam. Play a tune upon your spinet whilst your woman sings me a song.

Patch. I'm as much out of tune as my lady, if he knew all. [*Aside.*

Isab. I shall make excellent music.

[*Sits down to play.*

Patch. Really, sir, I am so frighted about your opening this charm, that I cann't remember one song.

Sir Jeal. Pish! hang your charm! come, come, sing any thing.

Patch. Yes, I'm likely to sing truly. [*Aside.*] Humph, humph; bless me! I cann't raise my voice, my heart pants so.

Sir Jeal. Why, what, does your heart pant so that you cann't play neither? Pray what key are you in, ha?

Patch. Ah! would the key was turn'd on you once. [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. Why don't you sing, I say?

Patch. When madam has put her spinet in tune, sir; humph, humph—

Isab. I cannot play, sir, whatever ails me. [*Rising.*

Sir Jeal. Zounds! sit down and play me a tune, or I'll break the spinet about your ears.

Isab. What will become of me? [*Sits down and plays.*

Sir Jeal. Come, mistress. [*To* PATCH.

Patch. Yes, sir. [*Sings, but horridly out of tune.*

Sir Jeal. Hey, hey! why, you are a-top of the house, and you are down in the cellar. What is the meaning of this? is it on purpose to cross me, ha?

Patch. Pray, madam, take it a little lower; I cannot reach that note—nor any note I fear.

Isab. Well, begin—Oh, Patch, we shall be discover'd.

Patch. I sink with apprehension, madam.—Humph, humph—[*Sings.*]

[CHARLES *opens the closet door.*

Cha. Music and singing!

'Tis thus the bright celestial court above
Beguiles the hours with music and with love.
Death! her father there! [*The women shriek*] Then I must fly—[*Exit into the closet*] [*Sir* JEALOUS *rises up hastily, seeing* CHARLES *slip back into the closet.*

Sir Jeal. Hell and furies! a man in the closet!——

Patch. Ah! a ghost! a ghost!—He must not enter the closet—[ISABINDA *throws herself down before the closet door, as in a swoon.*

Sir Jeal. The devil! I'll make a ghost of him I warrant you. [*Strives to get by.*

Patch. Oh, hold, sir, have a care; you'll tread upon my lady—Who waits there? bring some water. Oh! this comes of your opening the charm. Oh, oh, oh, oh! [*Weeps aloud.*

Sir Jeal. I'll charm you, housewife. Here lies the charm that conjur'd this fellow in, I'm sure on't. Come out, you rascal, do so. Zounds! take her from the door, or I'll spurn her from it, and break your neck down stairs.

Isab. He's gone; I heard him leap down.
[*Aside to* PATCH.

Patch. Nay then, let him enter—Here, here, madam, smell to this: come, give me your hand; come nearer to the window; the air will do you good.

Sir Jeal. I would she were in her grave. Where are you, sirrah? Villain! robber of my honour! I'll pull you out of your nest.
[*Goes into the closet.*

Patch. You'll be mistaken, old gentleman; the bird is flown.

Isab. I'm glad I have 'scap'd so well; I was almost dead in earnest with the fright.

Re-enter Sir JEALOUS *out of the closet.*

Sir Jeal. Whoever the dog was, he has escaped out of the window, for the sash is up: but though he is got out of my reach, you are not. And first, Mrs Pander, with your charms for the tooth-ache, get out of my house, go, troop; yet hold, stay, I'll see you out of my doors myself; but I'll secure your charge ere I go.

Isab. What do you mean, sir? was she not a creature of your own providing?

Sir Jeal. She was of the devil's providing, for aught I know.

Patch. What have I done, sir, to merit your displeasure?

Sir Jeal. I don't know which of you have done it, but you shall both suffer for it, till I can discover whose guilt it is. Go, get in there; I'll move you from this side of the house. [*Pushes* ISABINDA *in at the door and locks it, puts the key in his pocket.*] I'll keep the key myself; I'll try what ghost will get into that room: and now, forsooth, I'll wait on you down stairs.

Patch. Ah, my poor lady!——Down stairs, sir? but I won't go out, sir, till I have lock'd up my clothes.

Sir Jeal. If thou wert as naked as thou wert born, thou shouldst not stay to put on a smock. Come along, I say. When your mistress is marry'd, you shall have your rags and every thing that belongs to you; but till then—
[*Exit, pulling her out*

Patch. Oh, barbarous usage for nothing.

Re-enter at the lower end.

Sir Jeal. There, go, and come no more within sight of my habitation these three days, I charge you. [*Slaps the door after her.*

Patch. Did ever any body see such an old monster!

Enter CHARLES.

Oh, Mr Charles! your affairs and mine are in an ill posture.

Cha. I am inur'd to the frowns of fortune; but what has befall'n thee?

Patch. Sir Jealous, whose suspicious nature is always on the watch, nay, even while one eye sleeps the other keeps centinel, upon sight of you flew into such a violent passion, that I could find no stratagem to appease him, but in spite of all arguments he lock'd his daughter into his own apartment, and turn'd me out of doors.

Cha. Ha! oh, Isabinda!

Patch. And swears she shall see neither sun nor moon till she is Don Diego Babinetto's wife, who arrived last night, and is expected with impatience.

Cha. He dies; yes, by all the wrongs of love he shall! here will I plant myself, and through my breast he shall make his passage if he enters.

Patch. A most heroic resolution! there might be ways found out more to your advantage: policy is often preferr'd to open force.

Cha. I apprehend you not.

Patch. What think you of personating this Spaniard, imposing upon the father, and marrying your mistress by his own consent?

Cha. Say'st thou so, my angel! Oh, could that be done, my life to come would be too short to recompense thee: but how can I do that when I neither know what ship he came in, nor from what part of Spain, who recommends him, or how attended?

Patch. I can solve all this. He is from Madrid, his father's name Don Pedro Questo Portento Babinetto. Here's a letter of his to Sir Jealous, which he dropt one day. You understand Spanish, and the hand may be counterfeited. You conceive me, sir.

Cha. My better genius! thou hast reviv'd my drooping soul. I'll about it instantly. Come to my lodgings, and we will concert matters.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A Garden-gate open,* SCENTWELL *waiting within.*

Enter Sir George AIRY.

Sir Geo. So, this is the gate, and most invi-

tingly open. If there should be a blunderbuss here now, what a dreadful ditty would my fall make for fools, and what a jest for the wits; how my name would be roar'd about the streets! Well, I'll venture all.

Scent. Hist, hist! Sir George Airy——

[*Enters.*

Sir Geo. A female voice! thus far I'm safe—My dear!

Scent. No, I'm not your dear, but I'll conduct you to her. Give me your hand; you must go through many a dark passage and dirty step before you arrive—

Sir Geo. I know I must before I arrive at paradise; therefore be quick, my charming guide.

Scent. For aught you know. Come, come, your hand, and away.

Sir Geo. Here, here, child; you cann't be half so swift as my desires. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*The House.*

Enter MIRANDA.

Mir. Well, let me reason a little with my mad self. Now, don't I transgress all rules, to venture upon a man without the advice of the grave and wise! But then a rigid, knavish guardian who would have married me—to whom? even to his nauseous self, or nobody. Sir George is what I have try'd in conversation, inquir'd into his character, and am satisfied in both. Then his love! Who would have given a hundred pounds only to have seen a woman he had not infinitely lov'd? So I find my liking him has furnished me with arguments enough of his side; and now the only doubt remains whether he will come or no.

Enter SCENTWELL *and Sir* GEORGE.

Scent. That's resolv'd, madam, for here's the knight. [*Exit* SCENTWELL.

Sir Geo. And do I once more behold that lovely object, whose idea fills my mind, and forms my pleasing dreams!

Mir. What, beginning again in heroic!—Sir George, don't you remember how little fruit your last prodigal oration produc'd? Not one bare single word in answer.

Sir Geo. Ha! the voice of my incognita!—Why did you take ten thousand ways to captivate a heart your eyes alone had vanquish'd?

Mir. Pr'ythee, no more of these flights; for our time's but short, and we must fall to business. Do you think we can agree on that same terrible bugbear matrimony, without heartily repenting on both sides?

Sir Geo. It has been my wish since first my longing eyes beheld you.

Mir. And your happy ears drank in the pleasing news I had thirty thousand pounds.

Sir Geo. Unkind! did I not offer you, in those purchas'd minutes, to run the risk of your fortune, so you would but secure that lovely person to my arms?

Mir. Well, if you have such love and tenderness, since our wooing has been short, pray reserve it for our future days, to let the world see we are lovers after wedlock; 'twill be a novelty.

Sir Geo. Haste then, and let us tie the knot, and prove the envy'd pair——

Mir. Hold, not so fast; I have provided better than to venture on dangerous experiments headlong——My guardian, trusting to my dissembled love, has given up my fortune to my own disposal, but with this proviso, that he to-morrow morning weds me. He is now gone to Doctors Commons for a licence.

Sir Geo. Ha! a licence!

Mir. But I have planted emissaries that infallibly take him down to Epsom, under a pretence that a brother usurer of his is to make him his executor, the thing on earth he covets.

Sir Geo. 'Tis his known character.

Mir. Now my instruments confirm him this man is dying, and he sends me word he goes this minute. It must be to-morrow ere he can be undeceiv'd: that time is ours.

Sir Geo. Let us improve it then, and settle on our coming years endless, endless happiness.

Mir. I dare not stir till I hear he's on the road—— then I and my writings, the most material point, are soon remov'd.

Sir Geo. I have one favour to ask: if it lies in your power, you would be a friend to poor Charles; though the son of this tenacious man, he is as free from all his vices as nature and a good education can make him; and what now I have vanity enough to hope will induce you, he is the man on earth I love.

Mir. I never was his enemy, and only put it on as it help'd my designs on his father. If his uncle's estate ought to be in his possession, which I shrewdly suspect, I may do him a singular piece of service.

Sir Geo. You are all goodness.

Enter SCENTWELL.

Scent. Oh, madam! my master and Mr Marplot are just coming into the house.

Mir. Undone, undone! if he finds you here in this crisis all my plots are unravell'd.

Sir Geo. What shall I do? cann't I get back into the garden?

Scent. Oh no! he comes up those stairs.

Mir. Here, here, here! can you condescend to stand behind this chimney-board, Sir George?

Sir Geo. Any where, any where, dear madam! without ceremony.

Scent. Come, come, sir, lie close.

[*They put him behind the chimney-board.*

Enter Sir FRANCIS *and* MARPLOT, *Sir* FRANCIS *peeling an orange.*

Sir Fran. I could not go, though 'tis upon life and death, without taking leave of dear Chargy. Besides, this fellow buzz'd into my ears that thou might'st be so desperate as to shoot that wild rake which haunts the garden-gate, and that would bring us into trouble, dear——

Mir. So Marplot brought you back then?

Mar. Yes, I brought him back.

Mir. I'm oblig'd to him for that I'm sure.

[*Frowning at* MARPLOT *aside.*

Mar. By her looks she means she's not oblig'd to me. I have done some mischief now, but what I cann't imagine.

Sir Fran. Well, Chargy, I have had three messengers to come to Epsom to my neighbour Squeezum's, who, for all his vast riches, is departing. [*Sighs.*

Mar. Ay, see what all you usurers must come to.

Sir Fran. Peace, you young knave! Some forty years hence I may think on't.—But, Chargy, I'll be with thee to-morrow before those pretty eyes are open; I will, I will, Chargy, I'll rouse you, i'faith—Here, Mrs Scentwell, lift up your lady's chimney-board, that I may throw my peel in, and not litter her chamber.

Mir. Oh, my stars! what will become of us now?

Scent. Oh, pray, sir, give it me; I love it above all things in nature, indeed I do.

Sir Fran. No, no, hussy; you have the green pip already; I'll have no apothecary's bills.

[*Goes towards the chimney.*

Mir. Hold, hold, hold, dear Gardy! I have a, a, a, a monkey shut up there, and if you open it before the man comes that is to tame it, 'tis so wild 'twill break all my china, or get away, and that would break my heart; for I'm fond on't to distraction, next thee, dear Gardy!

[*In a flattering tone.*

Sir Fran. Well, well, Chargy, I won't open it; she shall have her monkey, poor rogue! Here, throw this peel out of the window.

[*Exit* SCENTWELL.

Mar. A monkey! dear madam, let me see it; I can tame a monkey as well as the best of them all. Oh, how I love the little miniatures of man!

Mir. Be quiet, mischief! and stand farther from the chimney—You shall not see my monkey—why sure— [*Striving with him.*

Mar. For Heav'n's sake, dear madam! let me but peep, to see if it be as pretty as Lady Fiddle Faddle's. Has it got a chain?

Mir. Not yet, but I design it one, shall last its lifetime. Nay, you shall not see it.——Look, Gardy, how he teazes me!

Sir Fran. [*Getting between him and the chimney.*] Sirrah, sirrah, let my Chargy's monkey alone, or bamboo shall fly about your ears. What! is there no dealing with you?

Mar. Pugh, pox of the monkey! here's a rout! I wish he may rival you.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, they have put two more horses to the coach, as you order'd, and 'tis ready at the door.

Sir Fran. Well, I am going to be executor; better for thee, jewel. B'ye, Chargy; one buss!—I'm glad thou hast got a monkey to divert thee a little.

Mir. Thank'e, dear Gardy!—Nay, I'll see you to the coach.

Sir Fran. That's kind, adad.

Mir. Come along, Impertinence.

[*To* MARPLOT.

Mar. [*Stepping back.*] 'Egad, I will see the monkey now. [*Lifts up the board, and discovers Sir* GEORGE.] O Lord! O Lord! Thieves! thieves! murder!

Sir Geo. Damn ye, you unlucky dog! 'tis I. Which way shall I get out? Shew me instantly, or I'll cut your throat.

Mar. Undone, undone! At that door there. But hold, hold; break that china, and—I'll bring you off.

[*He runs off at the corner, and throws down some china.*

Re-enter Sir FRANCIS, MIRANDA, *and* SCENTWELL.

Sir Fran. Mercy on me! what's the matter?

Mir. O, you toad! what have you done?

Mar. No great harm; I beg of you to forgive me. Longing to see the monkey, I did but just raise up the board, and it flew over my shoulders, scratch'd all my face, broke your china, and whisked out of the window.

Sir Fran. Where, where is it, sirrah?

Mar. There, there, Sir Francis, upon your neighbour Parmazan's pantiles.

Sir Fran. Was ever such an unlucky rogue! Sirrah, I forbid you my house. Call the servants to get the monkey again. Pug, Pug, Pug! I would stay myself to look for it, but that you know my earnest business.

Scent. Oh, my lady will be best to lure it back: all them creatures love my lady extremely.

Mir. Go, go, dear Gardy! I hope I shall recover it.

Sir Fran. B'ye, b'ye, dearee! Ah, mischief! how you look now! B'ye, b'ye. [*Exit.*

Mir. Scentwell, see him in the coach, and bring me word.

Scent. Yes, madam. [*Exit.*

Mir. So, sir, you have done your friend a signal piece of service, I suppose.

Mar. Why, look you, madam, if I have committed a fault, thank yourself; no man is more serviceable when I am let into a secret, and none more unlucky at finding it out. Who could divine your meaning; when you talk'd of a blunderbuss, who thought of a rendezvous? and when you talk'd of a monkey, who the devil dreamt of Sir George?

Mir. A sign you converse but little with our sex, when you cann't reconcile contradictions.

Enter SCENTWELL.

Scent. He's gone, madam, as fast as the coach and six can carry him———

Enter Sir GEORGE.

Sir Geo. Then I may appear.

Mar. Here's pug, ma'am—Dear Sir George!

make my peace. On my soul I never took you for a monkey before

Sir Geo. I dare swear thou didst not. Madam, I beg you to forgive him.

Mir. Well, Sir George, if he can be secret.

Mar. 'Odsheart, madam! I'm as secret as a priest, when trusted.

Sir Geo. Why, 'tis with a priest our business is at present.

Scent. Madam, here's Mrs Isabinda's woman to wait on you.

Mir. Bring her up.

Enter PATCH.

How do ye, Mrs Patch? What news from your lady?

Patch. That's for your private ear, madam. Sir George, there's a friend of yours has an urgent occasion for your assistance.

Sir Geo. His name.

Patch. Charles.

Mar. Ha! then there's something a-foot that I know nothing of. I'll wait on you, Sir George.

Sir Geo. A third person may not be proper, perhaps. As soon as I have dispatched my own affairs I am at his service; I'll send my servant to tell him I'll wait on him in half an hour.

Mir. How came you employ'd in this message, Mrs Patch?

Patch. Want of business, madam; I am discharg'd by my master, but hope to serve my lady still.

Mir. How? discharg'd! you must tell me the whole story within.

Patch. With all my heart, madam.

Mar. Tell it here, Mrs Patch. Pish! pox! I wish I were fairly out of the house. I find marriage is the end of this secret; and now I am half mad to know what Charles wants him for.

[*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Madam, I'm doubly press'd by love and friendship. This exigence admits of no delay. Shall we make Marplot of the party?

Mir. If you'll run the hazard, Sir George; believe he means well.

Mar. Nay, nay, for my part I desire to be let into nothing; I'll be gone, therefore pray don't mistrust me. [*Going.*

Sir Geo. So now he has a mind to be gone to Charles: but not knowing what affairs he may have upon his hands at present—I'm resolv'd he sha'n't stir. No, Mr Marplot, you must not leave us; we want a third person.

[*Takes hold of him.*

Mar. I never had more mind to be gone in my life.

Mir. Come along then; if we fail in the voyage, thank yourself for taking this ill-starr'd gentleman on board.

Sir Geo. That vessel ne'er can unsuccessful prove,
Whose freight is beauty, and whose pilot's love.

[*Exeunt Sir* GEORGE *and* MIRANDA.

Mar. Tyty ti, tyty ti.

[*Steals off the other way.*

Re-enter Sir GEORGE.

Sir Geo. Marplot! Marplot!

Mar. [*Entering.*] Here! I was coming, Sir George. Lord, cann't you let one tie up one's garter? [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter MIRANDA, PATCH, *and* SCENTWELL.

Mir. Well, Patch, I have done a strange bold thing; my fate is determin'd, and expectation is no more. Now, to avoid the impertinence and the roguery of an old man, I have thrown myself into the extravagance of a young one; if he should despise, slight, or use me ill, there's no remedy from a husband but the grave, and that's a terrible sanctuary to one of my age and constitution.

Patch. O! fear not, madam; you'll find your account in Sir George Airy; it is impossible a man of sense should use a woman ill endued with beauty, wit, and fortune. It must be the lady's fault if she does not wear the unfashionable name of wife easy, when nothing but complaisance and good humour is requisite on either side to make them happy.

Mir. I long till I am out of this house, lest any accident should bring my guardian back. Scentwell, put my best jewels into the little casket, slip them into thy pocket, and let us march off to Sir Jealous's.

Scent. It shall be done, madam. [*Exit* SCENT.

Patch. Sir George will be impatient, madam. If their plot succeeds we shall be well receiv'd; if not, he will be able to protect us. Besides, I long to know how my young lady fares.

Mir. Farewell, old Mammon, and thy detested walls! 'Twill be no more sweet Sir Francis! I shall be compell'd the odious task of dissembling no longer to get my own, and coax him with the wheedling names of my precious, my dear, dear Gardy!—O Heav'ns!

Enter Sir FRANCIS *behind.*

Sir Fran. Ah, my sweet Chargy! don't be frightened: [*She starts*] but thy poor Gardy has been abus'd, cheated, fool'd, betray'd; but nobody knows by whom.

Mir. Undone, past redemption! [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. What! won't you speak to me, Chargy?

Mir. I am so surpris'd with joy to see you, I know not what to say.

Sir Fran. Poor dear girl! But do you know that my son, or some such rogue, to rob or murder me, or both, contrived this journey? for, upon the road, I met my neighbour Squeezum well, and coming to town.

Mir. Good lack! good lack! what tricks are there in this world?

Enter SCENTWELL, *with a diamond necklace in her hand, not seeing Sir* FRANCIS.

Scent. Madam, be pleas'd to tie this necklace on, for I cann't get it into the—

[*Seeing Sir* FRANCIS.

Mir. The wench is a fool I think! Could you not have carried it to be mended without putting it in the box?

Sir Fran. What's the matter?

Mir. Only, dearee! I bid her, I bid her—— Your ill usage has put every thing out of my head. But won't you go, Gardy, and find out these fellows, and have them punished? and, and—

Sir Fran. Where should I look for them, child? No, I'll sit me down contented with my safety, nor stir out of my own doors till I go with thee to a parson.

Mir. [*Aside.*] If he goes into his closet I am ruin'd. Oh! bless me! in this fright I had forgot Mrs Patch.

Patch. Ay, madam, and I stay for your speedy answer.

Mir. [*Aside.*] I must get him out of the house. Now assist me, Fortune!

Sir Fran. Mrs Patch! I profess I did not see you: How dost thou do, Mrs Patch? Well, don't you repent leaving my Chargy?

Patch. Yes, every body must love her—but I come now——Madam, what did I come for? my invention is at the last ebb. [*Aside to* MIRANDA.

Sir Fran. Nay, never whisper, tell me.

Mir. She came, dear Gardy! to invite me to her lady's wedding, and you shall go with me, Gardy; 'tis to be done this moment, to a Spanish merchant. Old Sir Jealous keeps on his humour; the first minute he sees her, the next he marries her.

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha, ha! I'd go if I thought the sight of matrimony would tempt Chargy to perform her promise. There was a smile, there was a consenting look, with those pretty twinklers, worth a million! 'Ods-precious! I am happier than the Great Mogul, the Emperor of China, or all the potentates that are not in wars. Speak, confirm it, make me leap out of my skin.

Mir. When one has resolved, 'tis in vain to stand shilly-shally. If ever I marry, positively this is my wedding-day.

Sir Fran. Oh! happy, happy man—Verily, I will beget a son the first night shall disinherit that dog Charles. I have estate enough to purchase a barony, and be the immortalizing the whole family of the Gripes.

Mir. Come, then, Gardy, give me thy hand; let's to this house of Hymen.

My choice is fix'd, let good or ill betide.

Sir Fran. The joyful bridegroom I.

Mir. And I the happy bride. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter Sir JEALOUS, *meeting a Servant.*

Serv. Sir, here's a couple of gentlemen inquire for you; one of them calls himself Signior Diego Babinetto.

Sir Jeal. Ha! Signior Babinetto! admit 'em instantly—joyful minute; I'll have my daughter married to-night.

Enter CHARLES *in a Spanish habit, with Sir* GEORGE *dressed like a merchant.*

Sir Jeal. Senhor, beso las manos: vuestra merced es muy bien venido en esta tierra.

Cha. Senhor, soy muy humilde, y muy obligado cryado de vuestra merced: mi padre embia a vuestra merced, los mas profondos de sus respetos; y a commissionado este mercadel Ingles, de concluyr un negocio, que me haze el mas dichoss hombre del mundo, haziendo me su yerno.

Sir Jeal. I am glad on't, for I find I have lost much of my Spanish. Sir, I am your most humble servant. Signior Don Diego Babinetto has informed me, that you are commissioned by Signior Don Pedro, &c. his worthy father——

Sir Geo. To see an affair of marriage consummated between a daughter of yours and Signior Diego Babinetto, his son, here. True, sir, such a trust is repos'd in me, as that letter will inform you. I hope 'twill pass upon him. [*Aside.*

[*Gives him a letter.*

Sir Jeal. Ay, 'tis his hand. [*Seems to read.*

Sir Geo. Good, you have counterfeited to a nicety, Charles. [*Aside to* CHARLES.

Cha. If the whole plot succeeds as well, I'm happy.

Sir Jeal. Sir, I find by this that you are a man of honour and probity; I think, sir, he calls you Meanwell.

Sir Geo. Meanwell is my name, sir.

Sir Jeal. A very good name, and very significant.

Cha. Yes, faith, if he knew all. [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. For to mean well is to be honest, and to be honest is the virtue of a friend, and a friend is the delight and support of human society.

Sir Geo. You shall find that I'll discharge the part of a friend in what I have undertaken, Sir Jealous.

Cha. But little does he think to whom. [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Therefore, sir, I must entreat the presence of your fair daughter, and the assistance of your chaplain; for Signior Don Pedro strictly enjoined me to see the marriage rites performed as soon as we should arrive, to avoid the accidental overtures of Venus.

Sir Jeal. Overtures of Venus!

Sir Geo. Ay, sir; that is, those little hawking females that traverse the Park and the play-house, to put off their damag'd ware—they fasten upon foreigners like leeches, and watch their arrival as carefully as the Kentish men do a shipwreck: I warrant you, they have heard of him already.

Sir Jeal. Nay, I know this town swarms with them.

Sir Geo. Ay, and then you know the Spaniards are naturally amorous, but very constant; the first face fixes 'em; and it may be very dangerous to let him ramble ere he is tied.

Cha. Well hinted.

Sir Jeal. Pat to my purpose—Well, sir, there is but one thing more, and they shall be married instantly.

Cha. Pray Heaven that one thing more don't spoil all. [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. Don Pedro writ me word, in his last but one, that he designed the sum of five thousand crowns by way of jointure for my daughter, and that it should be paid into my hands upon the day of marriage—

Cha. Oh, the devil! [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. In order to lodge it in some of our funds, in case she should become a widow, and return for England——

Sir Geo. Pox on't! this is an unlucky turn. What shall I say? [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. And he does not mention one word of it in this letter.

Cha. I don't know how he should. [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Humph! True, Sir Jealous, he told me such a thing, but, but, but, but—he, he, he, he,—he did not imagine that you would insist upon the very day; for, for, for, for money, you know, is dangerous returning by sea; an, an, an, an—

Cha. Zounds! say we have brought it in commodities. [*Aside to Sir* GEORGE.

Sir Geo. And so, sir, he has sent it in merchandise, tobacco, sugars, spices, lemons, and so forth, which shall be turned into money with all expedition: in the mean time, sir, if you please to accept of my bond for performance——

Sir Jeal. It is enough, sir; I am so pleas'd with the countenance of Signior Diego, and the harmony of your name, that I'll take your word, and will fetch my daughter this moment. Within there. [*Enter Servant.*] Desire Mr Tackum, my neighbour's chaplain, to walk hither.

Serv. Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

Sir Jeal. Gentlemen, I'll return in an instant. [*Exit.*

Cha. Wondrous well! let me embrace thee.

Sir Geo. 'Egad, that five thousand crowns had like to have ruined the plot.

Cha. But that's over; and if Fortune throws no more rubs in our way——

Sir Geo. Thou'lt carry the prize——But hist! here he comes.

Enter Sir JEALOUS *dragging in* ISABINDA.

Sir Jeal. Come along, you stubborn baggage you! come along.

Isab. Oh! hear me, sir, hear me but speak one word.
Do not destroy my everlasting peace;
My soul abhors this Spaniard you have chose,
Nor can I wed him without being curst.

Sir Jeal. How's that?

Isab. Let this posture move your tender nature. [*Kneels.*
For ever will I hang upon these knees,
Nor loose my hands till you cut off my hold,
If you refuse to hear me, sir.

Cha. Oh! that I could discover myself to her! [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Have a care what you do: you had better trust to his obstinacy. [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. Did you ever see such a perverse slut? Off, I say. Mr Meanwell, pray help me a little.

Sir Geo. Rise, madam, and do not disoblige your father, who has provided a husband worthy of you, one that will love you equal with his soul, and one that you will love, when once you know him.

Isab. Oh! never, never!
Could I suspect that falsehood in my heart,
I would this moment tear it from my breast,
And straight present him with the treach'rous part.

Cha. Oh! my charming, faithful dear! [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. Falsehood! why, who the devil are you in love with? Don't provoke me, for, by St Iago, I shall beat you, housewife.

Cha. Heaven forbid! for I shall infallibly discover myself if he should.

Sir Geo. Have patience, madam, and look at him: why will ye prepossess yourself against a man that is master of all the charms you would desire in a husband?

Sir Jeal. Ay, look at him, Isabinda. Senhor, pase vind adelante.

Cha. My heart bleeds to see her grieve, who I imagined would with joy receive me. Senhora obligue me veustra merced de sa mano.

Sir Jeal. [*Pulling up her head.*] Hold up your head, hold up your head, hussy, and look at him. Is there a properer, handsomer, better shaped fellow in England, ye jade you? Ha! see, see the obstinate baggage shuts her eyes; by St Iago, I have a good mind to beat 'em out. [*Pushes her down.*

Isab. Do then, sir, kill me, kill me instantly;
'Tis much the kinder action of the two,
For 'twill be worse than death to wed him.

Sir Geo. Sir Jealous, you are too passionate. Give me leave, I'll try by gentle words to work her to your purpose.

Sir Jeal. I pray do, Mr Meanwell, I pray do; she'll break my heart. [*Weeps.*] There is in that jewels of the value of three thousand pounds, which were her mother's, and a paper wherein I have settled one half of my estate upon her now, and the whole when I die, but provided she marries this gentleman, else, by St Iago, I'll turn her out of doors, to beg or starve. Tell her this, Mr Meanwell, pray do. [*Walks off.*

Sir Geo. Ha! this is beyond expectation—Trust to me, sir, I'll lay the dangerous consequence of disobeying you at this juncture before her, I warrant you.

Cha. A sudden joy runs through my heart like a propitious omen. [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Come, madam, do not blindly cast your life away, just in the moment you would wish to save it.

Isab. Pray cease your trouble, sir; I have no wish but sudden death to free me from this hated Spaniard. If you are his friend, inform him what I say; my heart is given to another youth, whom I love with the same strength of passion that I hate this Diego, with whom, if I am forced to wed, my own hand shall cut the Gordian knot.

Sir Geo. Suppose this Spaniard, whom you strive to shun, should be the very man to whom you'd fly?

Isab. Ha!

Sir Geo. Would you not blame your rash resolve, and curse your eyes that would not look on Charles?

Isab. On Charles! Oh! you have inspired new life, and collected every wandering sense. Where is he? Oh! let me fly into his arms. [*Rises.*

Sir Geo. Hold, hold, hold. 'Sdeath! madam, you'll ruin all. Your father believes him to be Signior Babinetto. Compose yourself a little, pray, madam. [*He runs to Sir* JEALOUS.

Cha. Her eyes declare she knows me. [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. She begins to hear reason, sir; the fear of being turned out of doors has done it.

[*Runs back to* ISABINDA.

Isab. 'Tis he! Oh my ravish'd soul!

Sir Geo. Take heed, madam, you don't betray yourself. Seem with reluctance to consent, or you are undone. [*Runs to Sir* JEALOUS.] Speak gently to her, sir; I'm sure she'll yield; I see it in her face.

Sir Jeal. Well, Isabinda, can you refuse to bless a father whose only care is to make you happy, as Mr Meanwell has informed you? Come, wipe thy eyes; nay, pr'ythee do, or thou wilt break thy father's heart. See, thou bring'st the tears in mine, to think of thy undutiful carriage to me. [*Weeps.*

Isab. Oh, do not weep, sir! your tears are like a poniard to my soul. Do with me what you please; I am all obedience.

Sir Jeal. Ha! then thou art my child again.

Sir Geo. 'Tis done, and now, friend, the day's thy own.

Cha. The happiest of my life, if nothing intervene.

Sir Jeal. And wilt thou love him?

Isab. I will endeavour it, sir.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir, here is Mr Tackum.

Sir Jeal. Shew him into the parlour.—Senhor, tome vind sueipora; cette momento les junta les manos. [*Gives her to* CHARLES.

Cha. Oh, transport!—Senhor, yo la recibo como se deve un tesoro tan grande. Oh! my joy, my life, my soul! [*Embrace.*

Isab. My faithful, everlasting comfort!

Sir Jeal. Now, Mr Meanwell, let's to the parson,
Who, by his art, will join this pair for life,
Make me the happiest father, her the happiest wife. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to the Street before Sir* JEALOUS'S *Door.*

Enter MARPLOT *solus.*

Mar. I have hunted all over the town for Charles, but cann't find him, and by Whisper's scouting at the end of the street, I suspect he must be in the house again. I am informed too that he has borrowed a Spanish habit out of the play-house: what can it mean?

Enter a Servant of Sir JEALOUS'S *to him out of the House.*

Hark'e, sir, do you belong to this house?

Serv. Yes, sir.

Mar. Isn't your name Richard?

Serv. No, sir, Thomas.

Mar. Oh, ay, Thomas—Well, Thomas, there's a shilling for you.

Serv. Thank you, sir.

Mar. Pray, Thomas, can you tell if there be a gentleman in it in a Spanish habit?

Serv. There's a Spanish gentleman within, that is just a-going to marry my young lady, sir.

Mar. Are you sure he is a Spanish gentleman?

Serv. I'm sure he speaks no English that I hear of.

Mar. Then that cann't be him I want, for 'tis an English gentleman that I enquire after; he may be dressed like a Spaniard for aught I know.

Serv. Ha! who knows but this may be an impostor? I'll inform my master, for if he should be impos'd upon, he'll beat us all round. [*Aside.*] Pray come in, sir, and see if this be the person you inquire for.

Mar. Ay, I'll follow you.—Now for it.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to the Inside of the House.*

Enter MARPLOT *and Servant.*

Serv. Sir, please to stay here; I'll send my master to you. [*Exit.*

Mar. So, this was a good contrivance. If this be Charles now, he will wonder how I found him out.

Enter Servant and Sir JEALOUS.

Sir Jeal. What is your earnest business, blockhead! that you must speak with me before the ceremony's past? Ha! who's this?

Serv. Why this gentleman, sir, wants another gentleman in a Spanish habit, he says.

Sir Jeal. In a Spanish habit! 'tis some friend

of Signior Don Diego's, I warrant. Sir, your servant.

Mar. Your servant, sir.

Sir Jeal. I suppose you would speak with Signior Babinetto.

Mar. Sir!

Sir Jeal. I say, I suppose you would speak with Signior Babinetto.

Mar. Hey-day! what the devil does he say now?—Sir, I don't understand you.

Sir Jeal. Don't you understand Spanish, sir?

Mar. Not I indeed, sir.

Sir Jeal. I thought you had known Signior Babinetto.

Mar. Not I, upon my word, sir:

Sir Jeal. What then, you'd speak with his friend, the English merchant, Mr Meanwell?

Mar. Neither, sir, not I; I don't mean any such thing.

Sir Jeal. Why, who are you then, sir? and what do you want? [*In an angry tone.*

Mar. Nay, nothing at all, not I, sir. Pox on him! I wish I were out; he begins to exalt his voice; I shall be beaten again.

Sir Jeal. Nothing at all, sir! Why, then, what business have you in my house? ha!

Serv. You said you wanted a gentleman in a Spanish habit.

Mar. Why, ay, but his name is neither Babinetto nor Meanwell.

Sir Jeal. What is his name, then, sirrah? Ha! now I look at you again, I believe you are the rogue that threatened me with half-a-dozen myrmidons———

Mar. Me, sir! I never saw your face in all my life before.

Sir Jeal. Speak, sir, who is it you look for? or, or—

Mar. A terrible old dog!——Why, sir, only an honest young fellow of my acquaintance—I thought that here might be a ball, and that he might have been here in a masquerade. 'Tis Charles, Sir Francis Gripe's son, because I knew he us'd to come hither sometimes.

Sir Jeal. Did he so?——not that I know of, I'm sure. Pray Heav'n that this be Don Diego ——If I should be trick'd now—Ha? my heart misgives me plaguily——Within there! stop the marriage——Run, sirrah, call all my servants! I'll be satisfied that this is Signior Pedro's son ere he has my daughter.

Mar. Ha! Sir George! what have I done now?

Enter Sir GEORGE, *with a drawn sword, between the scenes.*

Sir Geo. Ha! Marplot here—oh, the unlucky dog—What's the matter, Sir Jealous?

Sir Jeal. Nay, I don't know the matter, Mr Meanwell.

Mar. Upon my soul, Sir George——— [*Going up to Sir* GEORGE.

Sir Jeal. Nay, then, I'm betray'd, ruin'd, undone. Thieves, traitors, rogues! [*Offers to go in.*] Stop the marriage, I say——

Sir Geo. I say go on, Mr Tackum.—Nay, no entering here; I guard this passage, old gentleman: the act and deed were both your own, and I'll see 'em sign'd, or die for't.

Enter Servant.

Sir Jeal. A pox on the act and deed!—Fall on, knock him down.

Sir Geo. Ay, come on, scoundrels! I'll prick your jackets for you.

Sir Jeal. Zounds! sirrah, I'll be reveng'd on you. [*Beats* MARPLOT.

Sir Geo. Ay, there your vengeance is due. Ha, ha!

Mar. Why, what do you beat me for? I ha'n't married your daughter.

Sir Jeal. Rascals! why don't you knock him down?

Serv. We are afraid of his sword, sir; if you'll take that from him, we'll knock him down presently.

Enter CHARLES *and* ISABINDA.

Sir Jeal. Seize her then.

Cha. Rascals! retire; she's my wife; touch her if you dare; I'll make dog's meat of you.

Mar. Ay, I'll make dog's meat of you, rascal.

Sir Jeal. Ah! downright English—Oh, oh, oh, oh!

Enter Sir FRANCIS GRIPE, MIRANDA, PATCH, SCENTWELL, *and* WHISPER.

Sir Fran. Into the house of joy we enter without knocking——Ha! I think 'tis the house of sorrow, Sir Jealous.

Sir Jeal. Oh, Sir Francis, are you come? What! was this your contrivance, to abuse, trick, and chouse me out of my child.

Sir Fran. My contrivance! what do you mean?

Sir Jeal. No, you don't know your son there in a Spanish habit!

Sir Fran. How! my son in a Spanish habit! Sirrah, you'll come to be hang'd. Get out of my sight, ye dog! get out of my sight.

Sir Jeal. Get out of your sight, sir! get out with your bags. Let's see what you'll give him now to maintain my daughter.

Sir Fran. Give him! he shall never be the better for a penny of mine—and you might have look'd after your daughter better, Sir Jealous. Trick'd, quoth-a! 'Egad, I think you design'd to trick me: but look ye, gentlemen, I believe I shall trick you both. This lady is my wife, do you see, and my estate shall descend only to the heirs of her body.

Sir Geo. Lawfully begotten by me—I shall be extremely obliged to you, Sir Francis.

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha, ha! poor Sir George! you see your project was of no use: does not your hundred pounds stick in your stomach! ha, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. No, faith, Sir Francis, this lady has given me a cordial for that. [*Takes her by the hand.*

Sir Fran. Hold, sir, you have nothing to say to this lady.

Sir Geo. Nor you nothing to do with my wife, sir.

Sir Fran. Wife, sir!

Mir. Ay, really, guardian, 'tis even so. I hope you'll forgive my first offence.

Sir Fran. What, have you chous'd me out of my consent and your writings then, mistress, ha?

Mir. Out of nothing but my own, guardian.

Sir Jeal. Ha, ha, ha! 'tis some comfort at least to see you are over-reach'd as well as myself. Will you settle your estate upon your son now?

Sir Fran. He shall starve first.

Mir. That I have taken care to prevent. There, sir, are the writings of your uncle's estate, which have been your due these three years.

[*Gives* CHARLES *papers.*

Cha. I shall study to deserve this favour.

Mar. Now, how the devil could she get those writings, and I know nothing of it!

Sir Fran. What, have you robb'd me too, mistress! 'egad, I'll make you restore 'em—hussy, I will so.

Sir Jeal. Take care I don't make you pay the arrears, sir. 'Tis well 'tis no worse, since 'tis no better. Come, young man, seeing thou hast outwitted me, take her, and bless you both!

Cha. I hope, sir, you'll bestow your blessing too; 'tis all I ask. [*Kneels.*

Mar. Do, Gardy, do.

Sir Fran. Confound you all! [*Exit.*

Mar. Mercy upon us, how he looks!

Sir Geo. Ha, ha, ha! ne'er mind his curses, Charles; thou'lt thrive not one jot the worse for 'em. Since this gentleman is reconcil'd, we are all made happy.

Sir Jeal. I always lov'd precaution, and took care to avoid dangers; but when a thing was past, I ever had philosophy to be easy.

Cha. Which is the true sign of a great soul. I lov'd your daughter, and she me, and you shall have no reason to repent her choice.

Isab. You will not blame me, sir, for loving my own country best.

Mar. So here's every body happy, I find, but poor Pilgarlick. I wonder what satisfaction I shall have for being cuff'd, kick'd, and beaten in your service!

Sir Jeal. I have been a little too familiar with you as things are fallen out; but since there's no help for't, you must forgive me.

Mar. 'Egad, I think so—but provided that you be not so familiar for the future.

Sir Geo. Thou hast been an unlucky rogue.

Mar. But very honest.

Cha. That I'll vouch for, and freely forgive thee.

Sir Geo. And I'll do you one piece of service more, Marplot; I'll take care that Sir Francis make you master of your estate.

Mar. That will make me as happy as any of you.

Patch. Your humble servant begs leave to remind you, madam.

Isab. Sir, I hope you'll give me leave to take Patch into favour again.

Sir Jeal. Nay, let your husband look to that; I have done with my care.

Cha. Her own liberty shall always oblige me. Here's nobody but honest Whisper and Mrs Scentwell to be provided for now. It shall be left to their choice to marry or keep their services.

Whisp. Nay, then, I'll stick to m master.

Scent. Coxcomb! and I prefer my lady before a footman.

Sir Jeal. Hark, I hear the music; the fiddlers smell a wedding. What say you, young fellows, will you have a dance?

Sir Geo. With all my heart; call 'em in.

[*A dance.*

Sir Jeal. Now let us in and refresh ourselves with a cheerful glass, in which we'll bury all animosities: and

By my example let all parents move,
And never strive to cross their children's love;
But still submit that care to Providence above.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

IN me you see one Busy Body more,
Though you may have enough of one before.
With epilogues, the Busy Body's way,
We strive to help, but sometimes mar a play.
At this mad sessions, half condemn'd ere tried,
Some in three days have been turn'd off and died.
In spite of parties, their attempts are vain,
For like false prophets they ne'er rise again:
Too late when cast your favour one beseeches,
And epilogues prove execution speeches.
Yet sure I spy no Busy Bodies here,
And one may pass since they do every where.
Sour critics time, and breath, and censures waste,
And balk you pleasures to refine your taste;
One busy Don ill-tim'd high tenets preaches,
Another yearly shews himself in speeches;
Some sniv'ling cit would have a peace for spite,
To starve those warriors who so bravely fight,
Still of a foe upon his knees afraid,
Whose well bang'd troops want money, heart, and bread;
Old beaux, who none, not e'en themselves, can please,
Are busy still for nothing—but to tease;

The young, so busy to engage a heart,
The mischief done are busy most to part;
Ungrateful wretches! who still cross one's will,
When they more kindly might be busy still:
One to a husband who ne'er dream'd of horns
Shews how dear spouse with friend his brows adorns:
Th' officious tell-tale fool (he should repent it)
Parts three kind souls that liv'd at peace contented!
Some with law quirks set houses by the ears;
With physic one what he would heal impairs;
Like that dark mop'd-up fry, that neighb'ring curse,
Who to remove love's pains bestow a worse.
Since then this meddling tribe infest the age,
Bear one a while expos'd upon the stage;
Let none but Busy Bodies vent their spite,
And with good humour pleasure crown the night.

THE WONDER.

A WOMAN KEEPS A SECRET!

BY

Mrs CENTLIVRE.

PROLOGUE.

OUR author fears the critics of the stage,
Who, like barbarians, spare nor sex nor age;
She trembles at those censors in the pit,
Who think good nature shews a want of wit.
Such malice, Oh! what Muse can undergo it?
To save themselves they always damn the poet.
Our author flies from such a partial jury,
As wary lovers from the nymphs of Drury:
To the few candid judges for a smile
She humbly sues to recompence her toil;
To the bright circle of the fair she next
Commits her cause, with anxious doubts perplex'd.
Where can she with such hopes of favour kneel
As to those judges who her frailties feel?
A few mistakes her sex may well excuse,
And such a plea no woman should refuse:
If she succeeds, a woman gains applause;
What female but must favour such a cause?
Her faults—whate'er they are—e'en pass 'em by,
And only on her beauties fix your eye.
In plays, like vessels floating on the sea,
There's none so wise to know their destiny:
In this, howe'er, the pilot's skill appears,
While by the stars his constant course he steers:
Rightly our author does her judgment shew,
That for her safety she relies on you.
Your approbation, fair ones! cann't but move
Those stubborn hearts which first you taught to love.
The men must all applaud this play of ours,
For who dare see with other eyes than yours?

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Don LOPEZ, *a Grandee of Portugal.*
Don FELIX, *his Son, in love with* VIOLANTE.
FREDERICK, *a Merchant.*
Don PEDRO, *Father to* VIOLANTE.
Colonel BRITON, *a Scotsman.*
GIBBY, *his Footman.*
LISSARDO, *Footman to* FELIX.

WOMEN.

Donna VIOLANTE, *designed for a Nun by her father, in love with* FELIX.
Donna ISABELLA, *Sister to* FELIX.
INIS, *her Maid.*
FLORA, *Maid to* VIOLANTE.

Alguazil, Attendants, Servants, &c.

SCENE,—*Lisbon.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Street.*

Enter DON LOPEZ *meeting* FREDERICK.

Fred. My lord, Don Lopez.

Lop. How d'ye, Frederick?

Fred. At your lordship's service. I am glad to see you look so well, my lord. I hope Antonio's out of danger?

Lop. Quite contrary; his fever increases they tell me; and the surgeons are of opinion his wound is mortal.

Fred. Your son, Don Felix, is safe I hope.

Lop. I hope so too; but they offer large rewards to apprehend him.

Fred. When heard your lordship from him?

Lop. Not since he went: I forbade him writing till the public news gave him an account of Antonio's health. Letters might be intercepted, and the place of his abode discovered.

Fred. Your caution was good, my lord. Tho' I am impatient to hear from Felix, yet his safety is my chief concern. Fortune has maliciously struck a bar between us in the affairs of life, but she has done me the honour to unite our souls.

Lop. I am not ignorant of the friendship between my son and you: I have heard him commend your morals, and lament your want of noble birth.

Fred. That's nature's fault, my lord. It is some comfort not to owe one's misfortunes to one's self; yet it is impossible not to regret the want of noble birth.

Lop. 'Tis a pity indeed such excellent parts as you are master of, should be eclipsed by mean extraction.

Fred. Such commendation would make me vain, my lord; did you not cast in the allay of my extraction.

Lop. There's no condition of life without its cares, and it is the perfection of a man to wear 'em as easy as he can: this unfortunate duel of my son's does not pass without impression; but since it is past prevention, all my concern is now how he may escape the punishment. If Antonio dies, Felix shall for England. You have been there; what sort of people are the English?

Fred. My lord, the English are by nature what the ancient Romans were by discipline, courageous, bold, hardy, and in love with liberty. Liberty is the idol of the English, under whose banner all the nation lists: give but the word for liberty, and straight more armed legions would appear than France and Philip keep in constant pay.

Lop. I like their principles: who does not wish for freedom in all degrees of life? though common prudence sometimes makes us act against it, as I am now obliged to do; for I intend to marry my daughter to Don Guzman, whom I expect from Holland every day, whither he went to take possession of a large estate left him by his uncle.

Fred. You will not surely sacrifice the lovely Isabella to age, avarice, and a fool! pardon the expression, my lord, but my concern for your beauteous daughter transports me beyond that good manners which I ought to pay your lordship's presence.

Lop. I cann't deny the justness of the character, Frederick; but you are not insensible what I have suffered by these wars; and he has two things which render him very agreeable to me for a son-in-law, he is rich and well born: as for his being a fool, I don't conceive how that can be any blot in a husband, who is already possessed of a good estate.—A poor fool indeed is a very scandalous thing, and so are your poor wits, in my opinion, who have nothing to be vain of but the inside of their sculls. Now for Don Guzman, I know I can rule him as I think fit. This is acting the politic part, Frederick, without which it is impossible to keep up the port of this life.

Fred. But have you no consideration for your daughter's welfare, my lord?

Lop. Is a husband of twenty thousand crowns a year no consideration? Now I think it a very good consideration.

Fred. One way, my lord. But what will the world say of such a match?

Lop. Sir, I value not the world a button.

Fred. I cannot think your daughter can have any inclination for such a husband.

Lop. There, I believe, you are pretty much in the right, though it is a secret which I never had the curiosity to enquire into, nor I believe ever shall.—Inclination, quoth-a! Parents would have a fine time on't if they consulted their children's inclinations! I'll venture you a wager, that in all the garrison towns in Spain and Portugal during the late war, there was not three women who have not had an inclination for every officer in the whole army; does it therefore follow that their fathers ought to pimp for them? No, no, sir, it is not a father's business to follow his children's inclinations till he makes himself a beggar.

Fred. But this is of another nature, my lord.

Lop. Look ye, sir, I resolve she shall marry Don Guzman the moment he arrives. Though I could not govern my son, I will my daughter, I assure you.

Fred. This match, my lord, is more preposterous than that which you proposed to your son, from whence arose this fatal quarrel.—Don Antonio's sister, Elvira, wanted beauty only, but Guzman every thing but——

Lop. Money—and that will purchase every thing; and so adieu. [*Exit.*

Fred. Monstrous! these are the resolutions which destroy the comforts of matrimony.—He is rich and well-born; powerful arguments indeed! Could I but add them to the friendship of Don Felix, what might I not hope? But a merchant and a grandee of Spain are inconsistent names.—Lissardo! from whence come you?

Enter LISSARDO *in a riding-habit.*

Liss. That letter will inform you, sir.

Fred. I hope your master's safe.

Liss. I left him so.—I have another to deliver which requires haste.—Your most humble servant, sir. [*Bowing.*

Fred. To Violante, I suppose.

Liss. The same. [*Exit.*

Fred. [*Reads.*] 'Dear Frederick! the two chief blessings of this life are a friend and a mistress; to be debarred the sight of those, is not to live. I hear nothing of Antonio's death, and therefore resolve to venture to thy house this evening, impatient to see Violante, and embrace my friend. ——Yours, FELIX.' Pray heaven he comes undiscovered.—Ha! Colonel Briton!

Enter Colonel BRITON *in a riding-habit.*

Col. Frederick, I rejoice to see thee.

Fred. What brought you to Lisbon, colonel?

Col. *La fortune de la guerre*, as the French say. I have commanded these three last years in Spain, but my country has thought fit to strike up a peace, and give us good protestants leave to hope for Christian burial; so I resolved to take Lisbon in my way home.

Fred. If you are not provided of a lodging, colonel, pray command my house while you stay.

Col. If I were sure I should not be troublesome, I would accept your offer, Frederick.

Fred. So far from trouble, colonel, I shall take it as a particular favour. What have we here?

Col. My footman: this is our country dress, you must know, which for the honour of Scotland I make all my servants wear.

Enter GIBBY *in a Highland dress.*

Gib. What mun I de with the horses, and like yer honour? They will tack cald gin they stand in the causeway.

Fred. Oh, I'll take care of them. What, hoa! Vasquez!

Enter VASQUEZ.

Put those horses which that honest fellow will shew you into my stable, do you hear, and feed them well.

Vas. Yes, sir.——Sir, by my master's orders, I am, sir, your most obsequious humble servant. Be pleased to lead the way.

Gib. 'Sbleed! gang your gate, sir, and I sall follow ye. Ise tee hungry to feed on compliments. [*Exit.*

Fred. Ha! ha! a comical fellow.—Well, how do you like our country, colonel?

Col. Why, faith, Frederick, a man might pass his time agreeably enough within-side of a nunnery; but to behold such troops of soft, plump, tender, melting, wishing, nay, willing girls too, thro' a damn'd grate, gives us Britons strong temptations to plunder. Ah, Frederick! your priests are wicked rogues; they immure beauty for their own proper use, and shew it only to the laity to create desires and inflame account, that they may purchase pardons at a dearer rate.

Fred. I own wenching is something more difficult here than in England, where women's liberties are subservient to their inclinations, and husbands seem of no effect but to take care of the children which their wives provide.

Col. And does restraint get the better of inclination with your women here? No, I'll be sworn, not even in four-score. Don't I know the constitution of the Spanish ladies?

Fred. And of all the ladies where you come, colonel: you were ever a man of gallantry.

Col. Ah, Frederick! the kirk half starves us. Scotsmen. We are kept so sharp at home, that we feed like cannibals abroad. Hark ye:—hast thou never a pretty acquaintance now that thou wouldst consign over to a friend for half an hour, ha?

Fred. Faith, colonel, I am the worst pimp in Christendom; you had better trust to your own luck; the women will soon find you out, I warrant you.

Col. Ay, but it is dangerous foraging in an enemy's country; and since I have some hopes of seeing my own again, I had rather purchase my pleasure than run the hazard of a stiletto in my guts. 'Egad, I think I must e'en marry, and sacrifice my body for the good of my soul. Wilt thou recommend me to a wife then, one that is willing to exchange her moidores for English liberty? ha, friend?

Fred. She must be very handsome, I suppose.

Col. The handsomer the better——but be sure she has a nose.

Fred. Ay, ay, and some gold.

Col. Oh, very much gold; I shall never be able to swallow the matrimonial pill if it be not well gilded.

Fred. Puh! beauty will make it slide down nimbly.

Col. At first perhaps it may; but the second or third dose will choke me.—I confess, Frederick, women are the prettiest play-things in nature: but gold, substantial gold! gives 'em the air, the mien, the shape, the grace, and beauty of a goddess.

Fred. And has not gold the same divinity in their eyes, colonel?

Col. Too often—Money is the very god of marriage; the poets dress him in a saffron robe, by which they figure out the golden deity, and his lighted torch blazons those mighty charms which encourage us to list under his banner.

None marry now for love, no, that's a jest:
The self-same bargain serves for wife and beast.

Fred. You are always gay, colonel. Come, shall we take a refreshing glass at my house, and consider what has been said?

Col. I have two or three compliments to discharge for some friends, and then I shall wait on you with pleasure. Where do you live?

Fred. At yon corner house with the green rails.

Col. In the close of the evening I will endeavour to kiss your hand. Adieu. [*Exit.*

Fred. I shall expect you with impatience. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in Don* LOPEZ'S *House.*

Enter ISABELLA, *and* INIS, *her Maid.*

Inis. For goodness sake, madam, where are you going in this pet?

Isab. Any where to avoid matrimony. The thoughts of a husband is as terrible to me as the sight of a hobgoblin.

Inis. Ay, of an old husband: but if you may choose for yourself, I fancy matrimony would be no such frightful thing to you.

Isab. You are pretty much in the right, Inis: but to be forced into the arms of an idiot, a sneaking, snivelling, drivelling, avaricious fool! who has neither person to please the eye, sense to charm the ear, nor generosity to supply those defects. Ah, Inis! what pleasant lives women lead in England, where duty wears no fetter but inclination! The custom of our country enslaves us from our very cradles, first to our parents, next to our husbands, and when Heaven is so kind to rid us of both these, our brothers still usurp authority, and expect a blind obedience from us; so that maids, wives, or widows, we are little better than slaves to the tyrant, man. Therefore, to avoid their power, I resolve to cast myself into a monastery.

Inis. That is, you'll cut your own throat to avoid another's doing it for you. Ah, madam! those eyes tell me you have no nun's flesh about you. A monastery, quoth-a!—where you'll wish yourself into the green-sickness in a month.

Isab. What care I? there will be no man to plague me.

Inis. No; nor, what's much worse, to please you, neither—Odslife, madam, you are the first woman that ever despaired in a Christian country ——Were I in your place— —

Isab. Why, what would your wisdom do if you were?

Inis. I'd embark with the first fair wind with all my jewels, and seek my fortune on t'other side the water: no shore can treat you worse than your own. There's ne'er a father in Christendom should make me marry any man against my will.

Isab. I am too great a coward to follow your advice. I must contrive some way to avoid Don Guzman, and yet stay in my own country.

Enter Don LOPEZ.

Lop. Must you so, mistress? but I shall take care to prevent you. [*Aside.*]—Isabella, whither are you going, my child?

Isab. Ha! my father!—To church, sir.

Inis. The old rogue has certainly overheard her. [*Aside.*

Lop. Your devotion must needs be very strong, or your memory very weak, my dear. Why, vespers are over for this night. Come, come, you shall have a better errand to church than to say your prayers there. Don Guzman is arrived in the river, and I expect him a-shore to-morrow.

Isab. Ha! to-morrow!

Lop. He writes me word that his estate in Holland is worth twelve thousand crowns a-year; which, together with what he had before, will make thee the happiest wife in Lisbon.

Isab. And the most unhappy woman in the world.—Oh, sir, if I have any power in your heart, if the tenderness of a father be not quite extinct, hear me with patience.

Lop. No objection against the marriage, and I will hear whatsoever thou hast to say.

Isab. That's torturing me on the rack, and forbidding me to groan. Upon my knees I claim the privilege of flesh and blood. [*Kneels.*

Lop. I grant it; thou shalt have an armful of flesh and blood to-morrow. Flesh and blood, quoth-a! Heaven forbid I should deny thee flesh and blood, my girl!

Inis. Here's an old dog for you. [*Aside.*

Isab. Do not mistake, sir. The fatal stroke which separates soul and body is not more terrible to the thoughts of sinners, than the name of Guzman to my ear.

Lop. Puh, puh! you lie, you lie.

Isab. My frighted heart beats hard against my breast, as if it sought a passage to your feet, to beg you'd change your purpose.

Lop. A very pretty speech, this; if it were turned into blank verse, it would serve for a tragedy. Why, thou hast more wit than I thought thou hadst, child. I fancy this was all extempore; I don't believe thou didst ever think one word on't before.

Inis. Yes, but she has, my lord; for I have heard her say the same things a thousand times.

Lop. How, how—What, do you top your second-hand jests upon your father, hussy, who knows better what's good for you than you do yourself? Remember 'tis your duty to obey.

Isab. [*Rising.*] I never disobeyed before, and I wish I had not reason now; but nature hath got the better of my duty, and makes me loathe the harsh commands you lay.

Lop. Ha, ha! very fine! ha, ha!

Isab. Death itself would be more welcome.

Lop. Are you sure of that?

Isab. I am your daughter, my lord, and can boast as strong a resolution as yourself. I'll die before I'll marry Guzman.

Lop. Say you so? I'll try that presently. [*Draws.*] Here, let me see with what dexterity you can breathe a vein now. [*Offers her his sword.*] The point is pretty sharp—'twill do your business, I warrant you.

Inis. Bless me, sir! What, do you mean to put a sword unto the hands of a desperate woman?

Lop. Desperate! ha, ha, ha! you see how desperate she is. What, art thou frighted, little Bell? ha!

Isab. I confess I am startled at your morals, sir.

Lop. Ay, ay, child, thou hadst better take the man; he'll hurt thee the least of the two.

Isab. I shall take neither, sir: Death has many doors; and when I can live no longer with pleasure, I shall find one to let him in at without your aid.

Lop. Say'st thou so, my dear Bell? Ods, I'm afraid thou art a little lunatic, Bell. I must take care of thee, child. [*Takes hold of her, and pulls out of his pocket a key.*] I shall make bold to secure thee, my dear; I'll see if locks and bars can keep thee till Guzman come. Go, get into your chamber:

There I'll your boasted resolution try,
And see who'll get the better, you or I.
[*Pushes her in, and locks the door.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Room in Don* PEDRO'S *House.*

Enter Donna VIOLANTE *reading a Letter, and* FLORA *following.*

Flo. What, must that letter be read again?

Vio. Yes, and again, and again, and again, a thousand times again; a letter from a faithful lover can ne'er be read too often; it speaks such kind, such soft, such tender things——[*Kisses it.*

Flo. But always the same language.

Vio. It does not charm the less for that.

Flo. In my opinion, nothing charms that does not change; and any composition of the four-and-twenty letters, after the first essay, from the same hand, must be dull, except a bank-note or a bill of exchange.

Vio. Thy taste is my aversion.——[*Reads.*]—'My all that's charming, since life's not life, exiled from thee, this night shall bring me to thy arms. Frederick and thee are all I trust. These six weeks absence has been in love's account six hundred years. When it is dark, expect the wonted signal at thy window: till when, adieu. Thine, more than his own, FELIX.'

Flo. Who would not have said as much to a lady of her beauty, and twenty thousand pounds?——Were I a man, methinks I could have said a hundred finer things.

Vio. What would you have said?

Flo. I would have compared your eyes to the stars, your teeth to ivory, your lips to coral, your neck to alabaster, your shape to——

Vio. No more of your bombast; truth is the best eloquence in a lover.——What proof remains ungiven of his love? When his father threatened to disinherit him for refusing Don Antonio's sister, from whence sprung this unhappy quarrel, did it shake his love for me? and now, though strict inquiry runs through every place, with large rewards to apprehend him, does he not venture all for me?

Flo. But you know, madam, your father Don Pedro designs you for a nun—to be sure, you look very like a nun!—and says your grandfather left you your fortune upon that condition.

Vio. Not without my approbation, girl, when I come to one-and-twenty, as I am informed. But, however, I shall run the risk of that. Go, call in Lissardo.

Flo. Yes, madam. Now for a thousand verbal questions. [*Exit, and re-enter with* LISSAR.

Vio. Well, and how do you do, Lissardo?

Liss. Ah, very weary, madam.——'Faith, thou look'st wondrous pretty, Flora. [*Aside to* FLO.

Vio. How came you?

Liss. En chevalier, madam, upon a hackney jade, which they told me formerly belonged to an English colonel; but I should have rather thought she had been bred a good Roman catholic all her lifetime—for she down'd on her knees to every stock and stone we came along by.——My chops water for a kiss, they do, Flora.

[*Aside to* FLORA.

Flo. You'd make one believe you are wondrous fond now.

Vio. Where did you leave your master?

Liss. Od, if I had you alone, housewife, I'd shew you how fond I could be———

[*Aside to* FLORA.

Vio. Where did you leave your master?

Liss. At a little farm-house, madam, about five miles off. He'll be at Don Frederick's in the evening——Od, I will so revenge myself of those lips of thine. [*To* FLORA.

Vio. Is he in health?

Flo. Oh, you counterfeit wondrous well.

[*To* LISSARDO.

Liss. No; every body knows I counterfeit very ill. [*To* FLORA.

Vio. How say you? Is Felix ill? What's his distemper? ha!

Liss. A pies on't! I hate to be interrupted.—Love, madam, love——In short, madam, I be-

lieve he has thought of nothing but your ladyship ever since he left Lisbon. I am sure he could not, if I may judge of his heart by my own.

[*Looking lovingly upon* FLORA.

Vio. How came you so well acquainted with your master's thoughts, Lissardo?

Liss. By an infallible rule, madam; words are the pictures of the mind, you know: now, to prove he thinks of nothing but you, he talks of nothing but you.—For example, madam, coming from shooting t'other day with a brace of partridges, Lissardo, said he, go bid the cook roast me these Violantes.——I flew into the kitchen full of thoughts of thee, cry'd, Here, cook, roast me these Floras. [*To* FLORA.

Flo. Ha, ha, excellent!—you mimic your master then, it seems.

Liss. I can do every thing as well as my master, you little rogue.—Another time, madam, the priest came to make him a visit, he called out hastily, Lissardo, said he, bring a Violante for my father to sit down on.——Then he often mistook my name, madam, and called me Violante: in short, I heard it so often, that it became as familiar to me as my prayers.

Vio. You live very merrily then, it seems.

Liss. Oh! exceeding merry, madam.

[*Kisses* FLORA'S *hand.*

Vio. Ha! exceeding merry: had you treats and balls?

Liss. Oh! yes, yes, madam, several.

Flo. You are mad, Lissardo, you don't mind what my lady says to you. [*Aside to* LISSARDO.

Vio. Ha! balls—Is he so merry in my absence? And did your master dance, Lissardo?

Liss. Dance, madam! where, madam?

Vio. Why, at those balls you speak of.

Liss. Balls! what balls, madam?

Vio. Why, sure you are in love, Lissardo; did not you say, but now, you had balls where you have been?

Liss. Balls, madam! Odslife, I ask your pardon, madam! I, I, I had mislaid some wash-balls of my master's t'other day; and because I could not think where I had laid them, just when he asked for them, he very fairly broke my head, madam; and now, it seems, I can think of nothing else. Alas! he dance, madam! No, no, poor gentleman! he is as melancholy as an unbraced drum.

Vio. Poor Felix! There, wear that ring for your master's sake, and let him know I shall be ready to receive him. [*Exit* VIOLANTE.

Liss. I shall, madam.——[*Puts on the ring.*] Methinks a diamond ring is a vast addition to the little finger of a gentleman. [*Admiring his hand.*

Flo. That ring must be mine.——Well, Lissardo, what haste you make to pay off arrears now? Look how the fellow stands!

Liss. 'Egad, methinks I have a very pretty hand—and very white—and the shape!——Faith, I never minded it so much before—In my opinion it is a very fine shaped hand——and becomes a diamond ring as well as the first grandee's in Portugal.

Flo. The man's transported! Is this your love, this your impatience?

Liss. [*Takes snuff.*] Now in my mind—I take snuff with a very jantee air——Well, I am persuaded I want nothing but a coach and a title to make me a very fine gentleman. [*Struts about.*

Flo. Sweet Mr Lissardo! [*Courtesying*] if I may presume to speak to you without affronting your little finger——

Liss. Odso, madam, I ask your pardon——Is it to me, or to the ring——you direct your discourse, madam?

Flo. Madam! Good lack! how much a diamond ring improves one!

Liss. Why, though I say it—I can carry myself as well as any body—But what wert thou going to say, child?

Flo. Why, I was going to say that I fancy you had best let me keep that ring: it will be a very pretty wedding-ring, Lissardo, would it not?

Liss. Humph! ah! But—but—but—I believe I sha'n't marry yet a while.

Flo. You sha'n't, you say——Very well! I suppose you design that ring for Inis.

Liss. No, no; I never bribe an old acquaintance—Perhaps I might let it sparkle in the eyes of a stranger a little till we come to a right understanding——but then, like all other mortal things, it would return from whence it came.

Flo. Insolent!——Is that your manner of dealing?

Liss. With all but thee—Kiss me, you little rogue you. [*Hugging her.*

Flo. Little rogue! Pr'ythee, fellow, don't be so familiar; [*Pushing him away*] if I mayn't keep your ring, I can keep my kisses.

Liss. You can, you say! Spoke with the air of a chamber-maid.

Flo. Replied with the spirit of a serving-man.

Liss. Pr'ythee, Flora, don't let you and I fall out; I am in a merry humour, and shall certainly fall in somewhere.

Flo. What care I where you fall in.

Enter VIOLANTE.

Vio. Why do you keep Lissardo so long, Flora, when you don't know how soon my father may awake? his afternoon naps are never long.

Flo. Had Don Felix been with her, she would not have thought the time long. These ladies consider nobody's wants but their own. [*Aside.*

Vio. Go, go, let him out, and bring a candle.

Flo. Yes, madam.

Liss. I fly, madam. [*Exeunt* LISS. *and* FLORA.

Vio. The day draws in, and night, the lover's friend, advances—night, more welcome than the sun to me, because it brings my love.

Flo. [*Shrieks within.*] Ah, thieves, thieves! Murder, murder!

Vio. [*Shrieks.*] Ah! defend me, Heaven! What do I hear? Felix is certainly pursu'd, and will be taken.——

Enter FLORA, *running.*

How now? why dost stare so? Answer me quickly; what's the matter?

Flo. Oh, madam! as I was letting out Lissardo, a gentleman rushed between him and I,

struck down my candle, and is bringing a dead person in his arms into our house.

Vio. Ha! a dead person! Heav'n grant it does not prove my Felix.

Flo. Here they are, madam.

Vio. I'll retire till you discover the meaning of this accident. [*Exit.*

Enter Colonel, with ISABELLA *in his arms, sets her down in a chair, and addresses himself to* FLORA.

Col. Madam, the necessity this lady was under of being conveyed into some house with speed and secrecy, will, I hope, excuse any indecency I might be guilty of in pressing so rudely into this—I am an entire stranger to her name and circumstances—would I were so to her beauty too. [*Aside.*] I commit her, madam, to your care, and fly to make her retreat secure if the street be clear: permit me to return, and learn from her own mouth if I can be further serviceable. Pray, madam, how is the lady of this house called?

Flo. Violante, signior——He is a handsome cavalier, and promises well. [*Aside.*

Col. Are you she, madam?

Flo. Only her woman, signior.

Col. Your humble servant, mistress. Pray be careful of the lady.——[*Gives her two moidores, and exit.*

Flo. Two moidores! Well, he is a generous fellow. This is the only way to make one careful. I find all countries understand the constitution of a chamber-maid.

Enter VIOLANTE.

Vio. Was you distracted, Flora, to tell my name to a man you never saw! Unthinking wench! who knows what this may turn to?——What, is the lady dead? Ah! defend me, Heaven! 'tis Isabella, sister to my Felix. What has befallen her? Pray Heaven he's safe.——Run and fetch some cold water.—Stay, stay, Flora.——Isabella, friend, speak to me: Oh! speak to me, or I shall die with apprehension.

Flo. See, she revives.

Isab. Oh! hold, my dearest father; do not force me, indeed I cannot love him.

Vio. How wild she talks!——

Isab. Ha! where am I?

Vio. With one as sensible of thy pain as thou thyself canst be.

Isab. Violante! what kind star preserved and lodged me here?

Flo. It was a terrestrial star called a man, madam; pray Jupiter he proves a lucky one.

Isab. Oh! I remember now. Forgive me, dear Violante! my thoughts ran so much upon the danger I escaped, I forgot.

Vio. May I not know your story?

Isab. Thou art no stranger to one part of it. I have often told thee that my father design'd to sacrifice me to Don Guzman, who, it seems, is just return'd from Holland, and expected ashore to-morrow, the day that he has set to celebrate our nuptials. Upon my refusing to obey him, he lock'd me into my chamber, vowing to keep me there till he arriv'd, and force me to consent. I know my father to be positive, never to be won from his design; and having no hope left me to escape the marriage, I leap'd from the window into the street.

Vio. You have not hurt yourself, I hope?

Isab. No; a gentleman passing by by accident caught me in his arms: at first, my fright made me apprehend it was my father, till he assured me to the contrary.

Flo. He is a very fine gentleman, I promise you, madam, and a well-bred man I warrant him. I think I never saw a grandee put his hand into his pocket with a better air in my whole lifetime; then he open'd his purse with such a grace, that nothing but his manner of presenting me with the gold could equal.

Vio. There is but one common road to the heart of a servant, and 'tis impossible for a generous person to mistake it.—Go, leave us, Flora.——But how came you hither, Isabella?

Isab. I know not; I desired the stranger to convey me to the next monastery, but ere I reach'd the door, I saw, or fancy'd that I saw, Lissardo, my brother's man, and the thought that his master might not be far off flung me into a swoon, which is all that I can remember.——Ha! what's here? [*Takes up a letter.*] 'For Colonel Briton; to be left at the post-house in Lisbon.' This must be dropt by the stranger who brought me hither.

Vio. Thou art fallen into the hands of a soldier; take care he does not lay thee under contribution, girl.

Isab. I find he is a gentleman, and if he is but unmarried, I could be content to follow him all the world over.—But I shall never see him more, I fear. [*Sighs and pauses.*

Vio. What makes you sigh, Isabella?

Isab. The fear of falling into my father's clutches again.

Vio. Can I be serviceable to you?

Isab. Yes, if you conceal me two or three days.

Vio. You command my house and secrecy.

Isab. I thank you, Violante. I wish you would oblige me with Mrs Flora a while.

Vio. I'll send her to you.—I must watch if dad be still asleep, or here will be no room for Felix. [*Exit.*

Isab. Well, I don't know what ails me; methinks I wish I could find this stranger out.

Enter FLORA.

Flo. Does your ladyship want me, madam?

Isab. Ay, Mrs Flora: I resolve to make you my confidante

Flo. I shall endeavour to discharge my duty, madam.

Isab. I doubt it not, and desire you to accept this as a token of my gratitude.

Flo. Oh, dear seniora! I should have been your humble servant without a fee.

Isab. I believe it—But to the purpose——Do you think, if you saw the gentleman who brought me hither, you should know him again?

Flo. From a thousand, madam; I have an excellent memory where a handsome man is concerned. When he went away, he said he would return again immediately. I admire he comes not.

Isab. Here, did you say? You rejoice me——though I'll not see him if he comes. Could not you contrive to give him a letter?

Flo. With the air of a duenna——

Isab. Not in this house—you must veil and follow him—He must not know it comes from me.

Flo. What, do you take me for a novice in love affairs? Though I have not practis'd the art since I have been in Donna Violante's service, yet I have not lost the theory of a chamber-maid—Do you write the letter, and leave the rest to me.—Here, here, here's pen, ink, and paper.

Isab. I'll do it in a minute. [*Sits down to write.*

Flo. So! this is a business after my own heart.—Love always takes care to reward his labourers, and Great Britain seems to be his favourite country.——Oh! I long to see the other two moidores with a British air——Methinks there's a grace peculiar to that nation in making a present.

Isab. So, I have done. Now, if he does but find this house again!

Flo. If he should not—I warrant I'll find him, if he's in Lisbon; for I have a strong possession that he has two moidores as good as ever was told. [*Puts the letter into her bosom.*

Enter VIOLANTE.

Vio. Flora, watch my papa; he's fast asleep in his study: if you find him stir give me notice. [*Colonel taps at the window.*] Hark, I hear Felix at the window; admit him instantly, and then to your post. [*Exit* FLORA.

Isab. What say you, Violante? is my brother come?

Vio. It is his signal at the window.

Isab. [*Kneels.*] Oh, Violante! I conjure you by all the love thou bear'st to Felix, by thy own generous nature, nay, more, by that unspotted virtue thou art mistress of, do not discover to my brother I am here.

Vio. Contrary to your desire be assur'd I never shall. But where's the danger?

Isab. Art thou born in Lisbon, and ask that question? He'll think his honour blemish'd by my disobedience, and would restore me to my father, or kill me; therefore, dear, dear girl——

Vio. Depend upon my friendship; nothing shall draw the secret from these lips, not even Felix, though at the hazard of his love. I hear him coming; retire into that closet.

Isab. Remember, Violante, upon thy promise my very life depends. [*Exit.*

Vio. When I betray thee, may I share thy fate.

Enter FELIX.

My Felix, my everlasting love! [*Runs into his arms.*

Fel. My life! my soul! my Violante!

Vio. What hazards dost thou run for me? Oh, how shall I requite thee?

Fel. If during this tedious painful exile thy thoughts have never wander'd from thy Felix, thou hast made me more than satisfaction.

Vio. Can there be room within this heart for any but thyself? No; if the god of love were lost to all the rest of human kind, thy image would secure him in my breast: I am all truth, all love, all faith, and know no jealous fears.

Fel. My heart's the proper sphere where Love resides: could he quit that, he would be no where found; and yet, Violante, I'm in doubt.

Vio. Did I ever give thee cause to doubt, my Felix?

Fel. True love has many fears, and Fear as many eyes as Fame, yet, sure, I think they see no fault in thee. [*Colonel taps again.*] What's that? [*Taps again.*

Vio. What! I heard nothing. [*Again.*

Fel. Ha! What means this signal at your window?

Vio. Somewhat, perhaps, in passing by, might accidentally hit it; it can be nothing else.

Col. [*Within.*] Hist, hist, Donna Violante! Donna Violante!

Fel. They use your name by accident too, do they, madam?

Enter FLORA.

Flo. There is a gentleman at the window, madam, which I fancy to be him who brought Isabella hither. Shall I admit him? [*Aside to* VIOLANTE.

Vio. Admit distraction rather! Thou art the cause of this, unthinking wretch. [*Aside to* FLORA.

Fel. What, has Mrs Scout brought you fresh intelligence? Death! I'll know the bottom of this immediately. [*Offers to go.*

Flo. Scout! I scorn your words, signior.

Vio. Nay, nay, nay, you must not leave me. [*Runs and catches hold of him.*

Fel. Oh! 'tis not fair not to answer the gentleman, madam: it is none of his fault that his visit proves unseasonable. Pray let me go, my presence is but a restraint upon you.

[*Struggles to get from her. The Col. pats again.*

Vio. Was ever accident so mischievous! [*Aside.*

Flo. It must be the colonel——Now to deliver my letter to him. [*Exit. The Col. taps louder.*

Fel. Hark! he grows impatient at your delay.——Why do you hold the man whose absence would oblige you? Pray, let me go, madam. Consider the gentleman wants you at the window. Confusion! [*Struggles still.*

Vio. It is not me he wants.

Fel. Death! not you! Is there another of your name in the house? But come on, convince me of the truth of what you say; open the window; if his business does not lie with you, your conversation may be heard. This, and only this, can take off my suspicion.—What, do you pause? Oh, guilt, guilt!

—Have I caught you? Nay, then I'll leap the balcony. If I remember, this way leads to it.

[*Breaks from her, and goes to the door where* ISABELLA *is.*

Vio. Oh, Heaven! what shall I do now! Hold, hold, hold, hold; not for the world—you enter there. Which way shall I preserve his sister from his knowledge? [*Aside.*

Fel. What, have I touch'd you? Do you fear your lover's life?

Vio. I fear for none but you.—For goodness sake do not speak so loud, my Felix. If my father hear you, I am lost for ever; that door opens into his apartment. What shall I do if he enters? There he finds his sister——If he goes out, he'll quarrel with the stranger.——Felix, Felix!——Nay, do not struggle to be gone, my Felix.——If I open the window he may discover the whole intrigue, and yet of all evils we ought to choose the least.——Your curiosity shall be satisfied. [*Goes to the window, and throws up the sash.*] Whoe'er you are, that with such insolence dare use my name, and give the neighbourhood pretence to reflect upon my conduct, I charge you instantly to be gone, or expect the treatment you deserve.

Col. I ask pardon, madam, and will obey: but when I left this house to-night———

Fel. Good!

Vio. It is most certainly the stranger. What will be the event of this, Heaven knows. [*Aside.*] You are mistaken in the house, I suppose, sir.

Fel. No, no, he's not mistaken.——Pray, madam, let the gentleman go on.

Vio. Wretched misfortune! Pray, be gone, sir, I know of no business you have here.

Col. I wish I did not know it neither——But this house contains my soul; then, can you blame my body for hovering about it?

Fel. Excellent!

Vio. Distraction! He will infallibly discover Isabella. I tell you again you are mistaken; however, for your own satisfaction, call to-morrow.

Fel. Matchless impudence! An assignation before my face!—No, he shall not live to meet your wishes.

[*Takes out a pistol, and goes towards the window; she catches hold of him.*

Vio. Ah! [*Shrieks.*] Hold, I conjure you.

Col. To-morrow's an age, madam! may I not be admitted to-night?

Vio. If you be a gentleman, I command your absence.——Unfortunate! what will my stars do with me! [*Aside.*

Col. I have done——only this——be careful of my life, for it is in your keeping.

[*Exit from the window.*

Fel. Pray, observe the gentleman's request, madam. [*Walking off from her.*

Vio. I am all confusion. [*Aside.*

Fel. You are all truth, all love, all faith! oh, thou all woman!——How have I been deceived?———'Sdeath! could you not have imposed upon me for this one night? Could neither my faithful love, nor the hazard that I have run to see you, make me worthy to be cheated on? Oh, thou——

Vio. Can I bear this from you! [*Weeps.*

Fel. [*Repeats.*] When I left this house to-night——To-night! the devil! return so soon!

Vio. Oh, Isabella! what hast thou involv'd me in! [*Aside.*

Fel. [*Repeats.*] This house contains my soul.

Vio. Yet I resolve to keep the secret. [*Aside.*

Fel. [*Repeats.*] Be careful of my life, for it is in your keeping.——Damnation!——How ugly she appears! [*Looking at her.*

Vio. Do not look so sternly on me, but believe me, Felix, I have not injur'd you, nor am I false.

Fel. Not false, not injured me! Oh, Violante, lost and abandoned to thy vice! Not false! Oh, monstrous!

Vio. Indeed I am not.—There is a cause which I must not reveal.——Oh, think how far honour can oblige your sex—then allow a woman may be bound by the same rule to keep a secret.

Fel. Honour! what hast thou to do with honour, thou that canst admit plurality of lovers! A secret! ha, ha, ha! his affairs are wondrous safe who trusts his secret to a woman's keeping. But you need give yourself no trouble about clearing this point, madam, for you are become so indifferent to me, that your truth and falsehood are the same.

Vio. My love! [*Offers to take his hand.*

Fel. My torment! [*Turns from her.*

Flo. So I have delivered my letter to the colonel, and received my fee. [*Aside.*] Madam, your father bade me see what noise that was.—For goodness sake, sir, why do you speak so loud?

Fel. I understand my cue, mistress; my absence is necessary; I'll oblige you.

[*Going, she takes hold of him.*

Vio. Oh, let me undeceive you first!

Fel. Impossible!

Vio. 'Tis very possible, if I durst.

Fel. Durst! ha, ha, ha! Durst, quoth-a!

Vio. But another time I'll tell thee all.

Fel. Nay, now or never——

Vio. Now it cannot be.

Fel. Then it shall never be—Thou most ungrateful of thy sex, farewell.

[*Breaks from her, and exit.*

Vio. Oh, exquisite trial of my friendship! Yet, not even this shall draw the secret from me.

That I'll preserve, let Fortune frown or smile,
And trust to Love my love to reconcile. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Chamber in Don* LOPEZ'S *House.*

Enter Don LOPEZ.

Lop. Was ever man thus plagued? Odsheart, I could swallow my dagger for madness. I know not what to think: sure Frederick had no hand in her escape.—She must get out of the window, and she could not do that without a ladder, and who could bring it to her but him? Ay, it must be so. The dislike he shew'd to Don Guzman, in our discourse to-day, confirms my suspicion, and I will charge him home with it. Sure children were given me for a curse! Why, what innumerable misfortunes attend us parents! when we have employed our whole care to educate and bring our children up to years of maturity, just when we expect to reap the fruits of our labour, a man shall, in the tinkling of a bell, see one hang'd and t'other whored. This graceless baggage!—But I'll to Frederick immediately; I'll take the alguazil with me and search his house, and if I find her, I'll use her——by St Anthony, I don't know how I'll use her. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to the Street.*

Enter Colonel with ISABELLA'S *Letter in his hand, and* GIBBY *following.*

Col. Well, though I could not see my fair incognito, Fortune, to make me amends, has flung another intrigue in my way. Oh! how I love these pretty kind coming females that won't give a man the trouble of racking his invention to deceive them.—Oh, Portugal! thou dear garden of pleasure—where Love drops down his mellow fruit, and every bough bends to our hands, and seems to cry, come, pull, and eat: how deliciously a man lives here, without fear of the stool of repentance!—This letter I received from a lady in a veil———some duenna, some necessary implement of Cupid. I suppose the style is frank and easy, I hope like her that writ it. [*Reads.*] 'Sir, I have seen your person, and like it,'—very concise—'and if you'll meet me at four o'clock in the morning, upon the Terriero de Passa, half an hour's conversation will let me into your mind.' —Ha, ha, ha! a philosophical wench! This is the first time I ever knew a woman had any business with the mind of a man.—'If your intellects answer your outward appearance, the adventure may not displease you. I expect you'll not attempt to see my face, nor offer any thing unbecoming the gentleman I take you for.'—Humph, the gentleman she takes me for! I hope she takes me to be flesh and blood, and then I'm sure I shall do nothing unbecoming a gentleman.——Well, if I must not see her face, it shall go hard if I don't know where she lives.——Gibby.

Gib. Here, an lik yer honour.

Col. Follow me at a good distance, do you hear, Gibby.

Gib. In troth dee I, weel eneugh, sir.

Col. I am to meet a lady upon the Terriero de Passa.

Gib. The deel an mine eyn gin I ken her, sir.

Col. But you will when you come there, sirrah.

Gib. Like eneugh, sir; I have as sharp an eyn tull a bonny lass as ere a lad in aw Scotland. And what mun I dee wi' her, sir?

Col. Why, if she and I part, you must watch her home, and bring me word where she lives.

Gib. In troth sal I, sir, gin the deel tak her not.

Col. Come along then, it is pretty near the time.—I like a woman that rises early to pursue her inclination.

Thus we improve the pleasures of the day,
While tasteless mortals sleep their time away.
[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to* FREDERICK'S *House.*

Enter INIS *and* LISSARDO.

Liss. Your lady run away, and you know not whither, say you?

Inis. She never greatly cared for me after finding you and I together. But you are very grave methinks, Lissardo.

Liss. [*Looking on the ring.*] Not at all—I have some thoughts indeed of altering my course of living: there is a critical minute in every man's life, which, if he can but lay hold of, he may make his fortune.

Inis. Ha! what do I see? A diamond ring! Where the deuce had he that ring? You have got a very pretty ring there, Lissardo.

Liss. Ay, the trifle is pretty enough———but the lady who gave it to me is a *bona roba* in beauty, I assure you. [*Cocks his hat, and struts.*

Inis. I cann't bear this.——The lady! what lady, pray?

Liss. O fie! there's a question to ask a gentleman.

Inis. A gentleman! why, the fellow's spoil'd! Is this your love for me? Ungrateful man! you'll break my heart, so you will. [*Bursts into tears.*

Liss. Poor tender-hearted fool!——

Inis. If I knew who gave you that ring, I'd tear her eyes out, so I would. [*Sobs.*

Liss. So, now the jade wants a little coaxing. Why, what dost weep for now, my dear? ha!

Inis. I suppose Flora gave you that ring; but I'll—

Liss. No, the devil take me if she did: you make me swear now.——So, they are all for the ring, but I shall bob 'em.——I did but joke: the ring is none of mine, it is my master's; I am to give it to be new set, that's all; therefore, pr'ythee, dry thy eyes, and kiss me; come.

Enter FLORA.

Inis. And do you really speak truth now?

Liss. Why do you doubt it?

Flo. So, so, very well! I thought there was an intrigue between him and Inis, for all he has forsworn it so often. [*Aside.*

Inis. Nor ha'n't you seen Flora since you came to town?

Flo. Ha! how dare she name my name? [*Aside.*

Liss. No, by this kiss I ha'n't. [*Kisses her.*

Flo. Here's a dissembling varlet! [*Aside.*

Inis. Nor don't you love her at all?

Liss. Love the devil! Why, did I not always tell thee she was my aversion?

Flo. Did you so, villain? [*Strikes him a box on the ear.*

Liss. Zounds, she here! I have made a fine spot of work on't. [*Aside.*

Inis. What's that for? ha! [*Brushes up to her.*

Flo. I shall tell you by and by, Mrs Frippery, if you don't get about your business.

Inis. Who do you call Frippery, Mrs Trollop?—Pray, get about your business, if you go to that. I hope you pretend to no right and title here.

Liss. What the devil! do they take me for an acre of land, that they quarrel about right and title to me? [*Aside.*

Flo. Pray, what right have you, mistress, to ask that question?

Inis. No matter for that; I can shew a better title to him than you, I believe.

Flo. What, has he given thee nine months earnest for a living title? ha, ha!

Inis. Don't fling your flaunting jests to me, Mrs Boldface, for I won't take 'em, I assure you.

Liss. So! now I'm as great as the famed Alexander. But, my dear Statira and Roxana, don't exert yourselves so much about me. Now, I fancy if you would agree lovingly together, I might, in a modest way, satisfy both your demands upon me.

Flo. You satisfy! No, sirrah, I am not to be satisfied so soon as you think, perhaps.

Ins. No, nor I neither.—What! do you make no difference between us?

Flo. You pitiful fellow you! What! you fancy, I warrant, I gave myself the trouble of dogging you out of love to your filthy person; but you are mistaken, sirrah—It was to detect your treachery.——How often have you sworn to me that you hated Inis, and only carried fair for the good cheer she gave you, but that you could never like a woman with crooked legs, you said?

Inis. How, how, sirrah, crooked legs! Ods, I could find in my heart—— [*Snatching up her petticoat a little.*

Liss. Here's a lying young jade now! Pr'ythee, my dear, moderate thy passion. [*Coaxingly.*

Inis. I'd have you to know, sirrah, my legs were never—Your master, I hope, understands legs better than you do, sirrah. [*Passionately.*

Liss. My master! so, so. [*Shaking his head, and winking.*

Flo. I am glad I have done some mischief, however. [*Aside.*

Liss. [*To* INIS.] Art thou really so foolish to mind what an enraged woman says? Don't you see she does it on purpose to part you and I? [*Runs to* FLORA.] Could not you find the joke without putting yourself in a passion, you silly girl you! Why, I saw you follow us plain enough, mun, and said all this that you might not go back with only your labour for your pains.—But you are a revengeful young slut though, I tell you that; but come, kiss and be friends.

Flo. Don't think to coax me: hang your kisses.

Fel. [*Within.*] Lissardo!

Liss. Odsheart! here's my master. The devil take both these jades for me; what shall I do with them?

Inis. Ha! 'tis Don Felix's voice—I would not have him find me here with his footman for the world. [*Aside.*

Fel. [*Within.*] Why, Lissardo, Lissardo!

Liss. Coming, sir. What a pox will you do?

Flo. Bless me, which way shall I get out?

Liss. Nay, nay, you must e'en set your quarrel aside, and be content to be mewed up in this clothes-press together, or stay where you are and face it out—there is no help for it.

Flo. Put me any where rather than that; come, come, let me in. [*He opens the press, and she goes in.*

Inis. I'll see her hang'd before I'll go into the place where she is.—I'll trust Fortune with my deliverance. Here used to be a pair of back stairs; I'll try to find them out. [*Exit.*

Enter FELIX *and* FREDERICK.

Fel. Was you asleep, sirrah, that you did not hear me call?

Liss. I did hear you, and answer'd you I was coming, sir.

Fel. Go, get the horses ready; I'll leave Lisbon to-night, never to see it more.

Liss. Hey-day! what's the matter now? [*Exit.*

Fred. Pray, tell me, Don Felix, what has ruffled your temper thus?

Fel A woman—Oh, friend! who can name woman, and forget inconstancy?

Fred. This from a person of mean education were excusable; such low suspicions have their source from vulgar conversation; men of your politer taste never rashly censure.—Come, this is some groundless jealousy.—Love raises many fears.

Fel. No, no; my ears convey'd the truth into my heart, and reason justifies my anger. Oh, my friend! Violante's false, and I have nothing left but thee in Lisbon which can make me wish ever to see it more, except revenge upon my rival, of whom I'm ignorant. Oh, that some miracle

would reveal him to me, that I might, through his heart, punish her infidelity!

Enter LISSARDO.

Liss. Oh, sir! here's your father, Don Lopez, coming up.

Fel. Does he know that I am here?

Liss. I cann't tell, sir; he ask'd for Don Frederick.

Fred. Did he see you?

Liss. I believe not, sir; for as soon as I saw him, I ran back to give my master notice.

Fel. Keep out of his sight then—and, dear Frederick, permit me to retire into the next room, for I know the old gentleman will be very much displeased at my return without his leave. [*Exit.*

Fred. Quick, quick, be gone, he is here.

Enter Don LOPEZ, *speaking as he enters.*

Lop. Mr Alguazil, wait you without, till I call for you Frederick, an affair brings me here—which—requires privacy—so that if you have any body within ear-shot, pray order them to retire.

Fred. We are private, my lord, speak freely.

Lop. Why, then, sir, I must tell you that you had better have pitch'd upon any man in Portugal to have injured than myself.

Fel. [*Peeping.*] What means my father?

Fred. I understand you not, my lord.

Lop. Tho' I am old, I have a son—Alas! why name I him? he knows not the dishonour of my house.

Fel. I am confounded! The dishonour of his house!

Fred. Explain yourself, my lord, I am not conscious of any dishonourable action to any man, much less to your lordship.

Lop. 'Tis false—you have debauch'd my daughter.

Fel. Debauch'd my sister! impossible! he could not, durst not, be that villain.

Fred. My lord, I scorn so foul a charge.

Lop. You have debauch'd her duty, at least, therefore instantly restore her to me, or, by St Anthony, I'll make you.

Fred. Restore her, my lord! where shall I find her?

Lop. I have those that will swear she is here in your house.

Fel. Ha! in this house!

Fred. You are misinform'd, my lord! Upon my reputation, I have not seen Donna Isabella since the absence of Don Felix.

Lop. Then pray, sir, if I am not too inquisitive, what motive had you for those objections you made against her marriage with Don Guzman yesterday?

Fred. The disagreeableness of such a match, I fear'd would give your daughter cause to curse her duty if she comply'd with your demands; that was all, my lord.

Lop. And so you help'd her thro' the window, to make her disobey.

Fel. Ha, my sister gone! Oh, scandal to our blood!

Fred. This is insulting me, my lord, when I assure you I have neither seen nor know any thing of your daughter.——If she is gone, the contrivance was her own, and you may thank your rigour for it.

Lop. Very well, sir; however, my rigour shall make bold to search your house. Here, call in the alguazil——

Flo. [*Peeping.*] The alguazil! What in the name of wonder will become of me?

Fred. The alguazil!—My lord, you'll repent this.

Enter Alguazil and Attendants.

Lop. No, sir, 'tis you that will repent it. I charge you in the king's name to assist me in finding my daughter.—Be sure you leave no part of the house unsearched. Come, follow me.

[*Gets towards the door where* FELIX *is:* FREDERICK *draws, and plants himself before the door.*

Fred. Sir, I must first know by what authority you pretend to search my house, before you enter here.

Alg. How, sir! dare you presume to draw your sword upon the representative of majesty? I am, sir, I am his majesty's alguazil, and the very quintessence of authority—therefore put up your sword, or I shall order you to be knocked down—for know, sir, the breath of an alguazil is as dangerous as the breath of a demi-culverin.

Lop. She is certainly in that room, by his guarding the door.—If he disputes your authority, knock him down, I say.

Fred. I shall shew you some sport first. The woman you look for is not here; but there is something in this room which I'll preserve from your sight at the hazard of my life.

Lop. Enter, I say; nothing but my daughter can be there.—Force his sword from him.

[FELIX *comes out, and joins* FREDERICK.

Fel. Villains, stand off! assassinate a man in his own house!

Lop. Oh, oh, oh, misericordia! what do I see? my son!

Alg. Ha, his son! Here's five hundred pounds good, my brethren, if Antonio dies; and that's in the surgeon's power—and he's in love with my daughter, you know—so seize him.——Don Felix, I command you to surrender yourself into the hands of justice, in order to raise me and my posterity; and in consideration you lose your head to gain me five hundred pounds, I'll have your generosity recorded on your tomb-stone—at my own proper cost and charge—I hate to be ungrateful.

Lop. Hold, hold! Oh, that ever I was born!

Fred. Did I not tell you you would repent, my lord? What, hoa! within there.

Enter Servants.

Arm yourselves, and let not a man in nor out but Felix.

Fel. Generous Frederick!

Fred. Look ye, alguazil, when you would be-

tray my friend for filthy lucre, I shall no more regard you as an officer of justice, but as a thief and robber thus resist you.

Fel. Come on, sir, we'll shew you play for the five hundred pounds.

Alg. Fall on, seize the money, right or wrong, ye rogues. [*They fight.*

Lop. Hold, hold, alguazil, I'll give you the five hundred pounds, that is, my bond to pay upon Antonio's death, and twenty pistoles, however things go, for you and these honest fellows to drink my health.

Alg. Say you so, my lord? Why, look ye, my lord, I bear the young gentleman no ill will, my lord. If I get but the five hundred pounds, my lord —why, look ye, my lord—'tis the same thing to me, whether your son be hanged or not, my lord.

Fel. Scoundrels!

Lop. Ay, well, thou art a good-natured fellow, that's the truth on't.—Come then, we'll to the tavern, and sign and seal this minute. Oh, Felix! why wouldst thou serve me thus?—But I cannot upbraid thee now, nor have I time to talk. Be careful of thyself, or thou wilt break my heart.

[*Exeunt* LOPEZ, *Alguazil, and Attendants.*

Fel. Now, Frederick, though I ought to thank you for your care of me, yet till I am satisfied as to my father's accusation, for I overheard it all, I cann't return the acknowledgments I owe you. Know you aught relating to my sister?

Fred. I hope my faith and truth are known to you——and here by both I swear, I am ignorant of every thing relating to your father's charge.

Fel. Enough: I do believe thee. Oh, Fortune! where will thy malice end!

Enter VASQUEZ.

Vasq. Sir, I bring you joyful news.

Fel. What's the matter?

Vasq. I am told that Don Antonio is out of danger, and now in the palace.

Fel. I wish it be true; then I am at liberty to watch my rival, and pursue my sister. Pr'ythee, Frederick, inform thyself of the truth of this report.

Fred. I will, this minute.——Do you hear, let nobody in to Don Felix till my return. [*Exit.*

Vasq. I'll observe, sir. [*Exit.*

Flo. [*Peeping.*] They have almost frightened me out of my wits, I'm sure.—— Now Felix is alone, I have a good mind to pretend I came with a message from my lady; but how then shall I say I came into the cupboard?

Enter VASQUEZ, *seeming to oppose the entrance of somebody.*

Vasq. I tell you, madam, Don Felix is not here.

Vio. [*Within.*] I tell you, sir, he is here, and I will see him.

Fel. What noise is that?

Vio. [*Breaking in.*] You are as difficult of access, sir, as a first minister of state.

Flo. My stars, my lady here!

[*Shuts the press close.*

Fel. If your visit was designed to Frederick, madam, he is abroad.

Vio. No, sir, the visit is to you.

Fel. You are very punctual in your ceremonies, madam.

Vio. Though I did not come to return your visit, but to take that which your civility ought to have brought me.

Fel. If my eyes, my ears, and my understanding lied, then I am in your debt; else not, madam.

Vio. I will not charge them with a term so gross, to say they lied, but call it a mistake, nay, call it any thing, to excuse my Felix.——Could I, think ye, could I put off my pride so far, poorly to dissemble a passion which I did not feel, or seek a reconciliation with what I did not love? ——Do but consider, if I had entertained another, should not I rather embrace this quarrel, pleased with the occasion that rid me of your visits, and gave me freedom to enjoy the choice which you think I have made? Have I any interest in thee but my love? or am I bound by aught but inclination to submit and follow thee? ——No law, whilst single, binds us to obey—— but your sex are, by nature and education, obliged to pay a deference to all womankind.

Fel. These are fruitless arguments. 'Tis most certain thou wert dearer to these eyes than all that Heaven e'er gave to charm the sense of man; but I would rather tear them out than suffer them to delude my reason and enslave my peace.

Vio. Can you love without esteem? and where is the esteem for her you still suspect? Oh, Felix, there is a delicacy in love, which equals even a religious faith! True love never doubts the object it adores, and sceptics there will disbelieve their sight.

Fel. Your notions are too refined for mine, madam.

Enter VASQUEZ.

How now, sirrah, what do you want?

Vasq. Only my master's cloak out of this press, sir, that's all.

Fel. Make haste, then.

Vasq. [*Opens the press, sees* FLORA, *and roars out.*]—Oh, the devil, the devil! [*Exit.*

Flo. Discovered!—nay, then legs befriend me. [*Runs out.*

Vio. Ha! a woman concealed! Very well, Felix.

Fel. A woman in the press?

Enter LISSARDO.

How the devil came a woman there, sirrah?

Liss. What shall I say now?

Vio. Now, Lissardo, shew your wit to bring your master off.

Liss. Off, madam!——Nay, nay, nay, there, there needs no great wit to, to, to bring him off, madam; for she did, and she did not come, as, as, as a, a, a man may say, directly to, to, to, to, to speak with my master, madam.

Vio. I see by your stammering, Lissardo, that your invention is at a very low ebb.

Fel. 'Sdeath! rascal, speak without hesitation, and the truth too, or I shall stick my spado in your guts.

Vio. No, no, your master mistakes; he would not have you speak the truth.

Fel. Madam, my sincerity wants no excuse.

Liss. I am so confounded between one and the other, that I cann't think of a lie. [*Aside.*

Fel. Sirrah, fetch me this woman back instantly—I'll know what business she has here.

Vio. Not a step; your master shall not be put to the blush.———Come, a truce, Felix. Do you ask me no more questions about the window, and I'll forgive this.

Fel. I scorn forgiveness where I own no crime; —but your soul, conscious of its guilt, would fain lay hold of this occasion, to blend your treason with my innocence.

Vio. Insolent!—Nay, if, instead of owning your fault, you endeavour to insult my patience, I must tell you, sir, you don't behave yourself like that man of honour you would be taken for; you ground your quarrel with me upon your own inconstancy; 'tis plain you are false yourself, and would make me the aggressor.——It was not for nothing the fellow opposed my entrance.——This last usage has given me back my liberty, and now my father's will shall be obeyed without the least reluctance; and so your servant. [*Exit.*

Fel. Oh, stubborn, stubborn heart, what wilt thou do?——Her father's will shall be obeyed! ——Ha! that carries her to a cloister, and cuts off all my hopes at once.——By Heaven, she shall not, must not leave me.——No, she is not false ——at least my love now represents her true,—because I fear to lose her.——Ha! villain, art thou here?——[*Turns upon* LISSARDO.]——Tell me this moment who this woman was, and for what intent she was here concealed——or——

Liss. Ah, good sir! forgive me, and I'll tell you the whole truth. [*Falls on his knees.*

Fel. Out with it then.

Liss. It, it, it was Mrs Flora, sir, Donna Violante's woman. You must know, sir, we have had a sneaking kindness for one another a great while——she was not willing you should know it; so when she heard your voice, she ran into the clothes-press. I would have told you this at first, but I was afraid of her lady's knowing it. This is the truth, as I hope for a whole skin, sir.

Fel. If it be not, I'll not leave you a whole bone in it, sirrah.——Fly, and observe if Violante goes directly home.

Liss Yes, sir, yes.

Fel. Fly, you dog, fly.—[*Exit* LISSARDO.]—I must convince her of my faith. Oh, how irresolute is a lover's heart!——My resentments cooled when hers grew high—nor can I struggle longer with my fate; I cannot quit her, no, I cannot, so absolute a conquest has she gained. —How absolute a woman's power!

In vain we strive their tyranny to quit,
In vain we struggle, for we must submit. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*The Terriero de Passa.*

Enter Colonel, and ISABELLA, *veiled;* GIBBY *at a distance.*

Col. Then you say it is impossible for me to wait on you home, madam?

Isab. I say it is inconsistent with my circumstances, colonel——and that way impossible for me to admit of it.

Col. Consent to go with me, then.—I lodge at one Don Frederick's, a merchant, just by here. —He is a very honest fellow, and I dare confide in his secrecy.

Isab. Ha! does he lodge there?—Pray Heaven I am not discovered. [*Aside.*

Col. What say you, my charmer?—shall we breakfast together? I have some of the best tea in the universe.

Isab. Puh! tea! is that the best treat you can give a lady at your lodgings, colonel?

Col. Well hinted——No, no, no, I have other things at thy service, child.

Isab. What are those things, pray?

Col. My heart, soul, and body, into the bargain.

Isab. Has the last no encumbrance upon it? Can you make a clear title, colonel?

Col. All freehold, child, and I'll afford thee a very good bargain. [*Embraces her.*

Gib. O' my saul, they mak muckle words about it.—Ise sae weary with standing—Ise e'en tak a sleep. [*Lies down.*

Isab. If I take a lease, it must be for life, colonel.

Col. Thou shalt have me as long or as little time as thou wilt, my dear. Come, let's to my lodgings, and we'll sign and seal this minute.

Isab. Oh, not so fast, colonel—There are many things to be adjusted before the lawyer and the parson come.

Col. The lawyer and parson!—No, no, you little rogue, we can finish our affairs without the help of the law—or the gospel.

Isab. Indeed but we cann't, colonel.

Col. Indeed!—Why hast thou then trepanned me out of my warm bed this morning for nothing? Why, this is shewing a man half famished a well-furnished larder, then clapping a padlock on the door till you starve him quite.

Isab. If you can find in your heart to say grace, colonel, you shall keep the key.

Col. I love to see my meat before I give thanks, madam; therefore uncover thy face, child, and I'll tell thee more of my mind—If I like you—

Isab. I dare not risk my reputation upon your *ifs*, colonel, and so adieu. [*Going.*

Col. Nay, nay, nay, we must not part.

Isab. As you ever hope to see me more, suspend your curiosity now; one step farther loses me for ever——Shew yourself a man of honour, and you shall find me a woman of honour.

Col. Well, for once I'll trust to a blind bargain, madam—[*Kisses her hand, and parts.*] But

I shall be too cunning for your ladyship, if Gibby observes my orders. Methinks, these intrigues which relate to the mind are very insipid.—The conversation of bodies is much more diverting. ——Ha! what do I see? my rascal asleep! Sirrah, did not I charge you to watch the lady? and is it thus you observe my orders, ye dog?

[*Kicks him all this while, and he shrugs, and rubs his eyes, and yawns.*

Gib. That's true, an' like yer honour; but I thought that when yence ye had her in yer ane hands, ye might a' ordered her yer sel weel eneugh without me, en ye ken, an' like yer honour.

Col. Sirrah, hold your impertinent tongue, and make haste after her. If you don't bring me some account of her, never dare to see my face again. [*Exit.*

Gib. Ay, this is bony wark indeed! to run three hundred mile to this wicked town, and before I can weel fill my weam to be sent a whore-hunting after this black she devil.——What gate sal I gang to speer for this wutch now? Ah, for a ruling elder—or the kirk's treasurer—or his mon—I'd gar my master mak twa o' this——But I am sure there's na sic honest people here, or there wud na be sa mickle scuddudrie.

Enter an English Soldier passing along.

Gib. Geud mon, did you see a woman, a lady, ony gate hereawa e'en now?

Englishman. Yes, a great many. What kind of a woman is it you enquire after?

Gib. Geud troth, she's na kenspeckle, she's aw in a cloud.

Englishman. What! 'tis some Highland monster which you brought over with you, I suppose: I see no such, not I. Kenspeckle, quoth-a!

Gib. Huly, huly, mon; the deel pike out yer een, and then ye'll see the better, ye Portigise tike.

Englishman. What says the fellow?

[*Turning to* GIBBY.

Gib. Say! I say I'm a bater fellow than e'er stude upon yer shanks——and gin I hear mair o' yer din, deel o' my saul, sir, but Ise crack yer croon.

Englishman. Get you gone, you Scotch rascal, and thank your heathen dialect, which I don't understand, that you ha'n't your bones broke.

Gib. Ay! an ye dinna understand a Scotsman's tongue, Ise see gin ye can understand a Scotsman's gripe. Wha's the bater mon now, sir? [*Lays hold of him, strikes up his heels, and gets astride over him.*

Here VIOLANTE *crosses the Stage;* GIBBY *jumps up from the Man, and brushes up to* VIOLANTE.

Gib. I vow, madam, but I am glad that ye and I are forgather'd.

Vio. What would the fellow have?

Gib. Nothing: away, madam; wo worthy yer heart, what a muckle deal o' mischief had you like to bring upon poor Gibby!

Vio. The man's drunk.

Gib. In troth am I not——And gin I had na found ye, madam, the Laird knows when I should; for my maister bad me ne'er gang hame without tidings o' ye, madam.

Vio. Sirrah! get about your business, or I'll have your bones drubb'd.

Gib. Geud faith, my maister has e'en done that t'yer honds, madam.

Vio. Who is your master, sir?

Gib. Mony a ane speers the gate they ken right weel: it is no sa lang sen ye parted wi' him. I wish he ken ye half as weel as ye ken him.

Vio. Pugh! the creature's mad, or mistakes me for somebody else; and I should be as mad as he to talk to him any longer.

[VIOLANTE *enters Don* PEDRO's *house.*

Enter LISSARDO *at the upper end of the Stage.*

Liss. So she's gone home, I see. What did that Scots fellow want with her? I'll try to find it out; perhaps I may discover something that may make my master friends with me again.

Gib. Are ye gone, madam? A deel scope in yer company, for I'm as weese as I was. But I'll bide and see wha's house it is, gin I can meet with ony civil body to speer at.—Weel, of aw men in the warld, I think our Scotsmen the greatest feuls, to leave their weel-favour'd honest women at hame to rin walloping after a pack of gycarlings here, that shame to shew their faces, and peur men, like me, are forced to be their pimps. A pimp! Godswarbit! Gibby's ne'er be a pimp——and yet, in troth, it's a thriving trade: I remember a countryman o' my ane, that by ganging o' sic like errants as I am now, came to get preferment.—My lad, wot ye wha lives here?

[*Turns and sees* LISSARDO.

Liss. Don Pedro de Mendosa.

Gib. And did you see a lady gang in but now?

Liss. Yes, I did.

Gib. And d'ye ken her tee?

Liss. It was Donna Violante, his daughter.—What the devil makes him so inquisitive? Here is something in it, that is certain. [*Aside.*] 'Tis a cold morning, brother, what think you of a dram?

Gib. In troth, very weel, sir.

Liss. You seem an honest fellow; pr'ythee, let's drink to our better acquaintance.

Gib. Wi' aw my heart, sir; gang your gate to the next house, and Ise follow ye.

Liss. Come along then. [*Exit.*

Gib. Don Pedro de Mendosa!—Donna Violante, his daughter!—that's as reight as my leg now—Ise need na mare; I'll tak a drink, and then to my maister.——

Ise bring him news will mak his heart full blee;
Gin he rewards it not, deel pimp for me. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—VIOLANTE'S *Lodgings.*

Enter ISABELLA *in a gay temper, and* VIOLANTE *out of humour.*

Isab. My dear! I have been seeking you this half hour, to tell you the most lucky adventure.

Vio. And you have pitch'd upon the most unlucky hour for it that you could possibly have found in the whole four-and-twenty.

Isab. Hang unlucky hours! I won't think of them; I hope all my misfortunes are past.

Vio. And mine all to come.

Isab. I have seen the man I like.

Vio. And I have seen the man that I could wish to hate.

Isab. And you must assist me in discovering whether he can like me or not.

Vio. You have assisted me in such a discovery already, I thank ye.

Isab. What say you, my dear?

Vio. I say I am very unlucky at discoveries, Isabella; I have too lately made one pernicious to my ease: your brother is false.

Isab. Impossible!

Vio. Most true.

Isab. Some villain has traduced him to you.

Vio. No, Isabella; I love too well to trust the eyes of others; I never credit the ill-judging world, or form suspicions upon vulgar censures; no, I had ocular proof of his ingratitude.

Isab. Then I am most unhappy. My brother was the only pledge of faith betwixt us; if he has forfeited your favour, I have no title to your friendship.

Vio. You wrong my friendship, Isabella; your own merit entitles you to every thing within my power.

Isab. Generous maid!—But may I not know what grounds you have to think my brother false?

Vio. Another time.—But tell me, Isabella, how can I serve you?

Isab. Thus then—The gentleman that brought me hither I have seen and talk'd with upon the Terriero de Passa this morning, and I find him a man of sense, generosity, and good humour; in short, he is every thing that I could like for a husband, and I have dispatch'd Mrs Flora to bring him hither: I hope you'll forgive the liberty I have taken.

Vio. Hither! to what purpose?

Isab. To the great universal purpose, matrimony.

Vio. Matrimony! why, do you design to ask him?

Isab. No, Violante, you must do that for me.

Vio. I thank you for the favour you design me, but desire to be excus'd: I manage my own affairs too ill to be trusted with those of other people; besides, if my father should find a stranger here, it might make him hurry me into a monastery immediately. I cann't for my life admire your conduct, to encourage a person altogether unknown to you.—'Twas very imprudent to meet him this morning, but much more so to send for him hither, knowing what inconveniency you have already drawn upon me.

Isab. I am not insensible how far my misfortunes have embarrass'd you; and, if you please, sacrifice my quiet to your own.

Vio. Unkindly urged!——Have I not preferr'd your happiness to every thing that's dear to me?

Isab. I know thou hast—then do not deny me this last request, when a few hours, perhaps, may render my condition able to clear thy fame, and bring my brother to thy feet for pardon.

Vio. I wish you don't repent of this intrigue. I suppose he knows you are the same woman that he brought in here last night.

Isab. Not a syllable of that; I met him veil'd, and to prevent his knowing the house, I ordered Mrs Flora to bring him by the back-door into the garden.

Vio. The very way which Felix comes! if they should meet, there would be fine work.——Indeed, my dear, I cann't approve of your design.

Enter FLORA.

Flo. Madam, the colonel waits your pleasure.

Vio. How durst you go upon such a message, mistress, without acquainting me?

Flo. So, I am to be huff'd for every thing!

Isab. 'Tis too late to dispute that now, dear Violante; I acknowledge the rashness of the action——but consider the necessity of my deliverance.

Vio. That indeed is a weighty consideration: Well, what am I to do?

Isab. In the next room I'll give you instructions.—In the mean time, Mrs Flora, shew the colonel into this.

[*Exit* FLORA *one way, and* ISABELLA *and* VIOLANTE *another.*

Re-enter FLORA *with the Colonel.*

Flo. The lady will wait on you presently, sir. [*Exit.*

Col. Very well——This is a very fruitful soil. I have not been here quite four-and-twenty hours, and I have three intrigues upon my hands already; but I hate the chase without partaking of the game.—[*Enter* VIOLANTE *veil'd.*]—Ha! a fine sized woman——pray Heaven she proves handsome——I am come to obey your ladyship's commands.

Vio. Are you sure of that, colonel?

Col. If you be not very unreasonable indeed, madam. A man is but a man.

[*Takes her hand, and kisses it.*

Vio. Nay, we have no time for compliments, colonel

Col. I understand you, madam—*Montrez moi votre chambre.* [*Takes her in his arms.*

Vio. Nay, nay, hold, colonel; my bed-chamber is not to be enter'd without a certain purchase.

Col. Purchase! humph! this is some kept mistress, I suppose, who industriously lets out her leisure hours.—[*Aside.*]—Look ye, madam, you must consider we soldiers are not overstock'd with money—but we make ample satisfaction in love; we have a world of courage upon our hands now, you know—then pr'ythee use a conscience, and I'll try if my pocket can come up to your price.

Vio. Nay, don't give yourself the trouble of drawing your purse, colonel; my design is levell'd at your person, if that be at your own disposal.

Col. Ay, that it is, faith, madam! and I'll settle it as firmly upon thee ——

Vio. As law can do it.

Col. Hang law in love affairs; thou shalt have right and title to it out of pure inclination.—A matrimonial hint again. Gad, I fancy the women have a project on foot to transplant the union into Portugal. [*Aside.*

Vio. Then you have an aversion to matrimony, colonel. Did you never see a woman in all your travels that you could like for a wife?

Col. A very odd question.—Do you really expect that I should speak truth now?

Vio. I do, if you expect to be dealt with, colonel.

Col. Why, then——Yes.

Vio. Is she in your country, or this?

Col. This is a very pretty kind of a catechism: but I don't conceive which way it turns to edification.—In this town, I believe, madam.

Vio. Her name is———

Col. Ay, how is she called, madam?

Vio. Nay, I ask you that, sir.

Col. O ho! Why, she is called———Pray, madam, how is it you spell your name?

Vio. Oh, colonel, I am not the happy woman, nor do I wish it.

Col. No! I'm sorry for that.——What the devil does she mean by all these questions? [*Aside.*

Vio. Come, colonel, for once be sincere—perhaps you may not repent it.

Col. This is like to be but a silly adventure, here's so much sincerity required [*Aside.*] 'Faith, madam, I have an inclination to sincerity, but I'm afraid you'll call my manners in question.

Vio. Not at all: I prefer truth before compliment in this affair.

Col. Why, then, to be plain with you, madam, a lady last night wounded my heart by a fall from a window, whose person I could be content to take, as my father took my mother, till death do us part——but who she is, or how distinguished, whether maid, wife, or widow, I cann't inform you; perhaps you are she.

Vio. Not to keep you in suspense, I am not she—but I can give you an account of her. That lady is a maid of condition—has ten thousand pounds—and, if you are a single man, her person and fortune are at your service.

Col. I accept the offer with the highest transports: But say, my charming angel! art thou not she? [*Offers to embrace her.*] This is a lucky adventure. [*Aside.*

Vio. Once again, colonel, I tell you I am not she—but at six this evening you shall find her on the Terriero de Passa with a white handkerchief in her hand. Get a priest ready, and you know the rest.

Col. I shall infallibly observe your directions, madam.

Enter FLORA *hastily, and whispers* VIOLANTE, *who starts, and seems surprised.*

Vio. Ha! Felix crossing, say you? What shall I do now!

Col. You seem surprised, madam.

Vio. Oh, colonel, my father is coming hither—and if he finds you here, I am ruined.

Col. Odslife, madam, thrust me any where. Cann't I go out this way?

Vio. No, no, no, he comes that way.—How shall I prevent their meeting? Here, here, step into my bed-chamber.

Col. Oh, the best place in the world, madam!

Vio. And be still, as you value her you love. Don't stir till you've notice, as ever you hope to have her in your arms.

Col. On that condition, I'll not breathe.

[*Exit Col.*

Enter FELIX.

Fel. I wonder where this dog of a servant is all this while—But she is at home, I find——How coldly she regards me!——You look, Violante, as if the sight of me were troublesome to you.

Vio. Can I do otherwise, when you have the assurance to approach me after what I saw today?

Fel. Assurance! rather call it good-nature, after what I heard last night. But such regard to honour have I in my love to you, I cannot bear to be suspected, nor suffer you to entertain false notions of my truth, without endeavouring to convince you of my innocence; so much good-nature have I more than you, Violante.——Pray give me leave to ask your woman one question; my man assures me she was the person you saw at my lodgings.

Flo. I confess it, madam, and ask your pardon.

Vio. Impudent baggage! not to undeceive me sooner: what business could you have there?

Fel. Lissardo and she, it seems, imitate you and I.

Flo. I love to follow the example of my betters, madam.

Fel. I hope I am justified.

Vio. Since we are to part, Felix, there needs no justification.

Fel. Methinks you talk of parting as a thing

indifferent to you. Can you forget how I have loved?

Vio. I wish I could forget my own passion, I should with less concern remember yours.——But for Mistress Flora——

Fel. You must forgive her——Must, did I say? I fear I have no power to impose, though the injury was done to me.

Vio 'Tis harder to pardon an injury done to what we love, than to ourselves; but at your request Felix, I do forgive her. Go watch my father, Flora, lest he should awake and surprise us.

Flo. Yes, madam [*Exit* FLORA.

Fel. Dost thou then love me, Violante?

Vio. What need of repetition from my tongue, when every look confesses what you ask?

Fel. Oh let no man judge of love but those who feel it: what wondrous magic lies in one kind look!——One tender word destroys a lover's rage, and melts his fiercest passion into soft complaint. Oh, the window, Violante! wouldst thou but clear that one suspicion!

Vio Pr'ythee, no more of that, my Felix; a little time shall bring thee perfect satisfaction.

Fel. Well, Violante, on condition you think no more of a monastery, I'll wait with patience for this mighty secret.

Vio. Ah, Felix, love generally gets the better of religion in us women. Resolutions made in the heat of passion ever dissolve upon reconciliation.

Enter FLORA *hastily.*

Flo. Oh, madam, madam, madam! my lord your father has been in the garden, and locked the back-door, and comes muttering to himself this way.

Vio. Then we are caught. Now, Felix, we are undone.

Fel. Heavens forbid! This is most unlucky. Let me step into your bed-chamber; he won't look under the bed; there I may conceal myself.

[*Runs to the door, and pushes it open a little.*

Vio. My stars! if he goes in there, he'll find the colonel.——No, no, Felix, that's no safe place: my father often goes thither, and should you cough or sneeze we are lost.

Fel. Either my eye deceived me, or I saw a man within: I'll watch him close.

Flo. Oh, invention, invention!—I have it, madam.—Here, here, sir, off with your sword, and I'll fetch you a disguise. [*Exit.*

Fel. She shall deal with the devil if she conveys him out without my knowledge.

Vio. Bless me, how I tremble!

Enter FLORA *with a Riding-hood.*

Flo. Here, sir, put on this.

Fel. Ay, ay, any thing to avoid Don Pedro.

[*She puts it on.*

Vio. Oh, quick, quick! I shall die with apprehension.

Flo. Be sure you don't speak a word.

Fel. Not for the Indies——But I shall observe you closer than you imagine. [*Aside.*

Ped. [*Within.*] Violante, where are you, child?

Enter Don PEDRO.

Why, how came the garden door open?—Ha! how now, who have we here?

Vio. Humph!—he'll certainly discover him. [*Aside.*

Flo. 'Tis my mother, an't please you, sir.

[*She and* FELIX *both courtesy.*

Ped. Your mother! By St Andrew, she's a strapper! Why, you are a dwarf to her.——How many children have you, good woman?

Vio. Oh, if he speaks we are lost. [*Aside.*

Flo. Oh, dear signior, she cannot hear you; she has been deaf these twenty years.

Ped. Alas, poor woman!—Why, you muffle her up as if she were blind too.

Fel. Would I were fairly off. [*Aside.*

Ped. Turn up her hood.

Vio. Undone for ever!——St Anthony forbid. Oh, sir, she has the dreadfullest unlucky eyes ——Pray don't look upon them: I made her keep her hood shut on purpose.——Oh, oh, oh, oh!

Ped. Eyes!—Why, what's the matter with her eyes?

Flo. My poor mother, sir, is much afflicted with the cholic, and, about two months ago, she had it grievously in her stomach, and was overpersuaded to take a dram of filthy English Geneva—which immediately flew up into her head, and caused such a defluxion in her eyes, that she could never since bear the day-light.

Ped. Say you so?——Poor woman!——Well, make her sit down, Violante, and give her a glass of wine.

Vio. Let her daughter give her a glass below, sir:—for my part, she has frighted me so I sha'n't be myself these two hours—I am sure her eyes are evil eyes.

Fel. Well hinted.

Ped. Well, well, do so.——Evil eyes! there are no evil eyes, child.

Flo. Come along, mother.—[*Speaks loud.*]—

[*Exeunt* FELIX *and* FLORA.

Vio. I'm glad he's gone. [*Aside.*

Ped. Hast thou heard the news, Violante?

Vio. What news, sir?

Ped. Why, Vasquez tells me that Don Lopez's daughter, Isabella, is run away from her father: that lord has very ill fortune with his children.—Well, I'm glad my daughter has no inclination to mankind, that my house is plagued with no suitors. [*Aside.*

Vio. This is the first word ever I heard of it. I pity her frailty.

Ped. Well said, Violante. Next week I intend thy happiness shall begin.

Enter FLORA.

Vio. I don't intend to stay so long, thank you, papa. [*Aside.*

Ped. My lady abbess writes word she longs to see thee, and has provided every thing in order for thy reception.——Thou wilt lead a happy life, my girl—fifty times before that of matrimony—where an extravagant coxcomb might make a beggar of thee, or an ill-natured surly dog break thy heart.

Flo. Break her heart! She had as good have her bones broke, as to be a nun; I am sure I had rather of the two. You are wondrous kind, sir: but if I had such a father, I know what I would do.

Ped. Why, what would you do, minx, ha?

Flo. I would tell him I had as good a right and title to the law of nature and the end of the creation as he had.

Ped. You would, mistress! Who the devil doubts it?——A good assurance is a chamber-maid's coat of arms, and lying and contriving the supporters.——Your inclinations are on tiptoe, it seems——If I were your father, housewife, I'd have a penance enjoined you, so strict, that you should not be able to turn you in your bed for a month.—You are enough to spoil your lady, housewife, if she had not abundance of devotion.

Vio. Fie, Flora! are you not ashamed to talk thus to my father?——You said yesterday you would be glad to go with me into the monastery.

Flo. Did I? I told a great lie then.

Ped. She go with thee! No, no, she's enough to debauch the whole convent.——Well, child, remember what I said to thee: next week——

Vio. Ay, and what I am to do this, too. [*Aside.*] —I am all obedient, sir; I care not how soon I change my condition.

Flo. But little does he think what change she means. [*Aside.*

Ped. Well said, Violante.——I am glad to find her so willing to leave the world; but it is wholly owing to my prudent management. Did she know that she might command her fortune when she came at age, or upon day of marriage, perhaps she'd change her note.——But I have always told her that her grandfather left it with this proviso, that she turned nun. Now, a small part of this twenty thousand pounds provides for her in the nunnery, and the rest is my own.—— There is nothing to be got in this life without policy.—[*Aside.*]———Well, child, I am going into the country for two or three days, to settle some affairs with thy uncle; and when I return, we'll proceed for thy happiness, child.——Good bye, Violante; take care of thyself.

[*Exeunt Don* PEDRO *and* VIOLANTE.

Flo. So, now for the colonel.———Hist, hist, colonel!

Enter Colonel.

Col. Is the coast clear?

Flo. Yes, if you can climb; for you must get over the wash-house, and jump from the garden-wall into the street.

Col. Nay, nay, I don't value my neck, if my incognito answers but thy lady's promise.

[*Exeunt Col. and* FLORA.

Enter FELIX.

Fel. I have lain perdue under the stairs till I watched the old man out. [VIOLANTE *opens the door.*] 'Sdeath! I am prevented. [*Exit* FELIX.

Enter VIOLANTE.

Vio. Now to set my prisoner at liberty. [*Goes to the door where the Colonel is hid.*] Sir, sir, you may appear.

Enter FELIX, *following her.*

Fel. May he so, madam? I had cause for my suspicion, I find. Treacherous woman!

Vio. Ha, Felix here! Nay, then all is discovered.

Fel. [*Draws.*] Villain! whoever thou art, come out, I charge thee, and take the reward of thy adulterous errand.

Vio. What shall I say?—Nothing but the secret, which I have sworn to keep, can reconcile this quarrel. [*Aside.*

Fel. A coward! Nay, then I'll fetch you out: think not to hide thyself: no; by St Anthony, an altar should not protect thee; even there I'd reach thy heart, though all the saints were armed in thy defence. [*Exit.*

Vio. Defend me, Heaven! What shall I do? I must discover Isabella, or here will be murder.

Enter FLORA.

Flo. I have helped the colonel off clear, madam.

Vio. Sayest thou so, my girl?——Then I am armed.

Re-enter FELIX.

Fel. Where has the devil, in compliance to your sex, conveyed him from my resentment?

Vio. Him! whom do you mean, my dear inquisitive spark? Ha, ha, ha, ha! you will never leave these jealous whims.

Fel. Will you never cease to impose upon me?

Vio. You impose upon yourself, my dear. Do you think I did not see you? Yes, I did, and resolved to put this trick upon you.

Fel. Trick!

Vio. Yes, trick. I knew you'd take the hint, and soon relapse into your wonted error. How easily your jealousy is fired! I shall have a blessed life with you.

Fel. Was there nothing in it then but only to try me?

Vio. Won't you believe your eyes?

Fel. My eyes! No, nor my ears, nor any of my senses, for they have all deceived me. Well, I am convinced that faith is as necessary in love as in religion; for the moment a man lets a woman know her conquest, he resigns his senses, and sees nothing but what she'd have him.

Vio. And as soon as that man finds his love return'd, she becomes as arrant a slave as if she had already said after the priest.

Fel. The priest, Violante, would dissipate those fears which cause these quarrels. When wilt thou make me happy?

Vio. To-morrow I will tell thee: my father is gone for two or three days to my uncle's; we have time enough to finish our affairs.—But pr'ythee leave me now, lest some accident should bring my father.

Fel. To-morrow! then——
Fly swift, ye hours, and bring to-morrow on!——
But must I leave you now, my Violante?

Vio. You must, my Felix.———We soon shall meet, to part no more!

Fel. Oh, rapturous sounds! Charming woman!
Thy words and looks have fill'd my heart
With joy, and left no room for jealousy.
Do thou like me each doubt and fear remove,
And all to come be confidence and love. [*Exit.*

Enter ISABELLA.

Isab. I am glad my brother and you are reconciled, my dear, and the colonel escaped without his knowledge; I was frighted out of my wits when I heard him return. I know not how to express my thanks, woman, for what you suffered for my sake; my grateful acknowledgment shall ever wait you, and to the world proclaim the faith, truth, and honour of a woman.

Vio. Pr'ythee don't compliment thy friend, Isabella.—You heard the colonel, I suppose.

Isab. Every syllable; and am pleased to find I do not love in vain.

Vio. Thou hast caught his heart, it seems, and an hour hence may secure his person.—Thou hast made hasty work on't, girl.

Isab. From thence I draw my happiness; we shall have no accounts to make up after consummation.

She who for years protracts her lover's pain,
And makes him wish, and wait, and sigh in vain,
To be his wife, when late she gives consent,
Finds half his passion was in courtship spent;
Whilst they who boldly all delays remove,
Find every hour a fresh supply of love. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—FREDERICK'S *House.*

Enter FELIX *and* FREDERICK.

Fel. This hour has been propitious; I am reconcil'd to Violante, and you assure me Antonio is out of danger.

Fred. Your satisfaction is doubly mine.

Enter LISSARDO.

Fel. What haste you made, sirrah, to bring me word if Violante went home.

Liss. I can give you very good reasons for my stay, sir.—Yes, sir, she went home.

Fred. Oh! your master knows that, for he has been there himself, Lissardo.

Liss. Sir, may I beg the favour of your ear?

Fel. What have you to say?

[*Whispers, and* FELIX *seems uneasy.*

Fred. Ha! Felix changes colour at Lissardo's news! What can it be?

Fel. A Scots footman that belongs to Colonel Briton, an acquaintance of Frederick's, say you? The devil! If she be false, by Heaven I'll trace her. Pr'ythee, Frederick, do you know one Colonel Briton, a Scotsman?

Fred. Yes; why do you ask me?

Fel. Nay, no great matter; but my man tells me that he has had some little differences with a servant of his, that's all.

Fred. He is a good, harmless, innocent fellow: I am sorry for it. The colonel lodges in my house; I knew him formerly in England, and met him here by accident last night, and gave him an invitation home. He is a gentleman of good estate, besides his commission; of excellent principles and strict honour, I assure you.

Fel. Is he a man of intrigue?

Fred. Like other men, I suppose. Here he comes.——

Enter Colonel.

Colonel, I began to think I had lost you.

Col. And not without some reason, if you knew all.

Fel. There's no danger of a fine gentleman's being lost in this town, sir.

Col. That compliment don't belong to me, sir; but, I assure you, I have been very near being run away with.

Fred. Who attempted it?

Col. Faith, I know not—only that she is a charming woman, I mean as much as I saw of her.

Fel. My heart swells with apprehension—Some accidental rencounter?

Fred. A tavern, I suppose, adjusted the matter.

Col. A tavern! no, no, sir; she is above that rank, I assure you: this nymph sleeps in a velvet bed, and lodgings every way agreeable.

Fel. Ha! a velvet bed!—I thought you said but now, sir, you knew her not.

Col. No more I don't, sir.

Fel. How came you then so well acquainted with her bed?

Fred. Ay, ay; come, come, unfold.

Col. Why, then, you must know, gentlemen, that I was convey'd to her lodgings by one of Cupid's emissaries, called a chamber-maid, in a chair, through fifty blind alleys, who, by the help of a key, let me into a garden.

Fel. 'Sdeath! a garden! this must be Violante's garden. [*Aside.*

Col. From thence conducted me into a spacious room, then dropt me a courtesy, told me her lady would wait on me presently; so, without unveiling, modestly withdrew.

Fel. Damn her modesty! this was Flora. [*Aside.*

Fred. Well, how then, colonel?

Col. Then, sir, immediately from another door issued forth a lady arm'd at both eyes, from whence such showers of darts fell round me, that had I not been covered with the shield of another beauty, I had infallibly fallen a martyr to her charms, for you must know I just saw her eyes —Eyes, did I say? no, no, hold; I saw but one eye, though I suppose it had a fellow equally as killing.

Fel. But how came you to see her bed, sir? ——'Sdeath! this expectation gives a thousand racks. [*Aside.*

Col. Why, upon her maid's giving notice her father was coming, she thrust me into the bed-chamber.

Fel. Upon her father's coming!

Col. Ay, so she said; but putting my ear to the key-hole of the door, I found it was another lover.

Fel. Confound the jilt! 'twas she, without dispute. [*Aside.*

Fred. Ah, poor colonel! ha, ha, ha!

Col. I discover'd they had had a quarrel, but whether they were reconcil'd or not I cann't tell, for the second alarm brought the father in good earnest, and had like to have made the gentleman and I acquainted, but she found some other stratagem to convey him out.

Fel. Contagion seize her, and make her body ugly as her soul! There is nothing left to doubt of now—'Tis plain 'twas she.—Sure he knows me, and takes this method to insult me. 'Sdeath! I cannot bear it. [*Aside.*

Fred. So, when she had dispatch'd her old lover, she paid you a visit in her bed-chamber; ha! colonel?

Col. No, pox take the impertinent puppy! he spoil'd my diversion; I saw her no more.

Fel. Very fine!—Give me patience, Heaven, or I shall burst with rage. [*Aside.*

Fred. That was hard.

Col. Nay, what was worse——But, sir, dear sir, do hearken to this:—[*To* FELIX.] The nymph that introduced me conveyed me out again over the top of a high wall, where I ran the danger of having my neck broke, for the father, it seems, had locked the door by which I enter'd.

Fel. That way I miss'd him.—Damn her invention! [*Aside.*] Pray, colonel——Ha, ha, ha! it's very pleasant; ha, ha!—Was this the same lady you met upon the Terriero de Passa this morning?

Col. Faith, I cann't tell, sir; I had a design to know who that lady was, but my dog of a footman, whom I had order'd to watch her home, fell fast asleep.—I gave him a good beating for his neglect, and I have never seen the rascal since.

Fred. Here he comes.

Enter GIBBY.

Col. Where have you been, sirrah?

Gib. Troth, Ise been seeking ye, an' like yer honour, these twa hoors and mair. I bring ye glad teedings, sir.

Col. What, have you found the lady?

Gib. Geud faith ha I, sir—and she's called Donna Violante, and her parent Don Pedro de Mendosa, and gin ye will gang wi' me, an' like yer honour, Ise make ye ken the hoose right weel.

Fel. Oh, torture! torture! [*Aside.*

Col. Ha! Violante! that's the lady's name of the house where my incognita is: sure it could not be her; at least, it was not the same house, I'm confident. [*Aside.*

Fred. Violante! 'tis false; I would not have you credit him, colonel.

Gib. The deel burst my bladder, sir, gin I lee.

Fel. Sirrah, I say you do lie, and I'll make you eat it, you dog; [*Kicks him*] and if your master will justify you——

Col. Not I, faith, sir—I answer for nobody's lies but my own: if you please, kick him again.

Gib. But gin he does Ise na tak it, sir, gin he was a thousand Spaniards.

[*Walks about in a passion.*

Col. I ow'd you a beating, sirrah, and I am oblig'd to this gentleman for taking the trouble off my hands; therefore, say no more; d'ye hear, sir? [*Aside to* GIBBY.

Gib. Troth de I, sir, and feel tee.

Fred. This must be a mistake, colonel, for I know Violante perfectly well, and I am certain she would not meet you upon the Terriero de Passa.

Col. Don't be too positive, Frederick: now I have some reasons to believe it was that very lady.

Fel. You'd very much oblige me, sir, if you'd let me know these reasons.

Col. Sir!

Fel. Sir, I say, I have a right to enquire into these reasons you speak of.

Col. Ha, ha! really, sir, I cannot conceive how you or any man can have a right to enquire into my thoughts.

Fel. Sir, I have a right to every thing that relates to Violante——and he that traduces her fame, and refuses to give his reasons for't, is a villain. [*Draws.*

Col. What the devil have I been doing! Now, blisters on my tongue by dozens! [*Aside.*

Fred. Pr'ythee, Felix, don't quarrel till you know for what: This is all a mistake, I'm positive.

Col. Look ye, sir, that I dare draw my sword, I think, will admit of no dispute.——But though fighting's my trade, I'm not in love with it, and think it more honourable to decline this business than pursue it. This may be a mistake: however, I'll give you my honour never to have any affair, directly or indirectly, with Violante, provided she is your Violante; but if there should happen to be another of her name, I hope you would not engross all the Violantes in the kingdom.

Fel. Your vanity has given me sufficient reasons to believe I'm not mistaken. I'll not be impos'd upon, sir.

Col. Nor I be bully'd, sir.

Fel. Bully'd! 'Sdeath! such another word, and I'll nail thee to the wall.

Col. Are you sure of that, Spaniard? [*Draws.*

Gib. [*Draws.*] Say na mair, mon. O' my saul, here's twa to twa. Dinna fear, sir; Gibby stands by ye, for the honour of Scotland.

[*Vapours about.*

Fred. By St Anthony you sha'n't fight [*Interposes*] on bare suspicion: be certain of the injury, and then ——

Fel. That I will this moment; and then, sir—I hope you are to be found.

Col. Whenever you please, sir. [*Exit* FELIX.

Gib. 'Sbleed, sir! there ne'er was a Scotsman yet that sham'd to show his face.

[*Strutting about.*

Fred. So, quarrels spring up like mushrooms, in a minute. Violante and he were but just reconcil'd, and you have furnish'd him with fresh matter for falling out again; and I am certain, colonel, Gibby is in the wrong.

Gib. Gin I be, sir, the mon that tald me leed, and gin he did, the deel be my landlord, hell my winter-quarters, and a rape my winding-sheet, gin I dee not lick him as lang as I can haud a stick in my hond, now, see ye.

Col. I am sorry for what I have said, for the lady's sake; but who could divine that she was his mistress? Pr'ythee, who is this warm spark?

Fred. He is the son of one of our grandees, nam'd Don Lopez de Pimentell, a very honest gentleman, but something passionate in what relates to his love. He is an only son, which may, perhaps, be one reason for indulging his passion.

Col. When parents have but one child, they either make a madman or a fool of him.

Fred. He is not the only child; he has a sister; but I think, through the severity of his father, who would have married her against her inclination, she has made her escape, and, notwithstanding he has offered five hundred pounds, he can get no tidings of her.

Col. Ha! how long has she been missing?

Fred. Nay, but since last night, it seems.

Col. Last night! the very time! How went she?

Fred. Nobody can tell; they conjecture through the window.

Col. I'm transported! this must be the lady I caught. What sort of a woman is she?

Fred. Middle-sized, a lovely brown, a fine pouting lip, eyes that roll and languish, and seem to speak the exquisite pleasure her arms could give.

Col. Oh! I am fir'd with this description—— 'tis the very she.——What's her name?

Fred. Isabella.——You are transported, colonel.

Col. I have a natural tendency in me to the flesh, thou know'st, and who can hear of charms so exquisite, and yet remain unmov'd?——Oh, how I long for the appointed hour! I'll to the Terriero de Passa, and wait my happiness; if she fails to meet me, I'll once more attempt to find her at Violante's, in spite of her brother's jealousy. [*Aside.*] Dear Frederick! I beg your pardon; but I had forgot I was to meet a gentleman upon business at five: I'll endeavour to dispatch him, and wait on you again as soon as possible.

Fred. Your humble servant, colonel. [*Exit.*

Col. Gibby, I have no business with you at present. [*Exit Colonel.*

Gib. That's weel.—Now will I gang and seek this loon, and gar him gang wi' me to Don Pedro's hoose.—Gin he'll no gang of himself, Ise gar him gang by the lug, sir. Godswarbit! Gibby hates a leer. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* VIOLANTE'S *Lodging.*

Enter VIOLANTE *and* ISABELLA.

Isab. The hour draws on, Violante, and now my heart begins to fail me; but I resolve to venture, for all that.

Vio. What, does your courage sink, Isabella?

Isab. Only the force of resolution a little retreated, but I'll rally it again, for all that.

Enter FLORA.

Flo. Don Felix is coming up, madam.

Isab. My brother! which way shall I get out?—Dispatch him as soon as you can, dear Violante.

[*Exit into the closet.*

Vio. I will.——

Enter FELIX, *in a surly humour.*

Felix, what brings you here so soon? did I not say to-morrow?

Fel. My passion chokes me; I cannot speak—Oh, I shall burst! [*Aside.*]

[*Throws himself into a chair.*

Vio. Bless me! are you not well, my Felix?

Fel. Yes—No—I don't know what I am.

Vio. Hey-day! what's the matter now? another jealous whim!

Fel. With what an air she carries it!—I sweat at her impudence. [*Aside.*

Vio. If I were in your place, Felix, I'd choose to stay at home when these fits of spleen are upon me, and not trouble such persons as are not obliged to bear with them.

[*Here he affects to be careless of her.*

Fel. I am very sensible, madam, of what you mean: I disturb you, no doubt; but were I in a better humour, I should not incommode you less: I am too well convinced you could easily dispense with my visit.

Vio. When you behave yourself as you ought to do, no company so welcome—but when you reserve me for your ill nature, I wave your merit, and consider what's due to myself.—And I must be free to tell you, Felix, that these humours of yours will abate, if not absolutely destroy, the very principles of love.

Fel. [*Rising.*] And I must be so free to tell you, madam, that since you have made such ill returns to the respect that I have paid you, all you do shall be indifferent to me for the future; and you shall find me abandon your empire with

so little difficulty, that I'll convince the world your chains are not so hard to break as your vanity would tempt you to believe.—I cannot brook the provocation you give.

Vio. This is not to be borne—Insolent! you abandon! you! whom I have so often forbade ever to see me more! Have you not fall'n at my feet? implored my favour and forgiveness? did you not trembling wait, and wish, and sigh, and swear yourself into my heart?. Ungrateful man! if my chains are so easily broke as you pretend, then you are the silliest coxcomb living you did not break them long ago; and I must think him capable of brooking any thing, on whom such usage could make no impression.

Isab. [*Peeping.*] A deuce take your quarrels! she'll never think on me.

Fel. I always believed, madam, my weakness was the greatest addition to your power; you would be less imperious had my inclination been less forward to oblige you.——You have indeed forbade me your sight, but your vanity even then assured you I would return, and I was fool enough to feed your pride.—Your eyes, with all their boasted charms, have acquired the greatest glory in conquering me——and the brightest passage of your life is wounding this heart with such arms as pierce but few persons of my rank.

[*Walks about in a great pet.*

Vio. Matchless arrogance! True, sir, I should have kept measures better with you, if the conquest had been worth preserving; but we easily hazard what gives us no pain to lose.——As for my eyes, you are mistaken if you think they have vanquished none but you: there are men above your boasted rank who have confess'd their power, when their misfortune in pleasing you made them obtain such a disgraceful victory.

Fel. Yes, madam, I am no stranger to your victories.

Vio. And what you call the brightest passage of my life is not the least glorious part of yours.

Fel. Ha, ha! don't put yourself in a passion, madam; for I assure you, after this day I shall give you no trouble.—You may meet your sparks on the Terriero de Passa at four in the morning, without the least regard to me—for, when I quit your chamber, the world sha'n't bring me back.

Vio. I am so well pleased with your resolution, I don't care how soon you take your leave.——But what you mean by the Terriero de Passa at four in the morning I cann't guess.

Fel. No, no, no, not you.—You was not upon the Terriero de Passa at four this morning.

Vio. No, I was not; but if I were, I hope I may walk where I please, and at what hour I please, without asking your leave.

Fel. Oh, doubtless, madam!—and you might meet Colonel Briton there, and afterwards send your emissary to fetch him to your house——and, upon your father's coming in, thrust him into your bed-chamber—without asking my leave. 'Tis no business of mine, if you are exposed among all the footmen in town—nay, if they ballad you, and cry you about at a halfpenny a-piece ——they may without my leave.

Vio. Audacious! don't provoke me——don't: my reputation is not to be sported with [*Going up to him*] at this rate—no, sir, it is not. [*Bursts into tears.*] Inhuman Felix!—Oh, Isabella! what a train of ills thou hast brought on me! [*Aside.*

Fel. Ha! I cannot bear to see her weep—a woman's tears are far more fatal than our swords. [*Aside.*] Oh, Violante——'Sdeath! what a dog am I! Now have I no power to stir.——Dost not thou know such a person as Colonel Briton? Pr'ythee tell me, didst not thou meet him at four this morning upon the Terriero de Passa?

Vio. Were it not to clear my fame, I would not answer thee, thou black ingrate!——but I cannot bear to be reproached with what I even blush to think of, much less to act. By Heaven, I have not seen the Terriero de Passa this day.

Fel. Did not a Scotch footman attack you in the street neither, Violante?

Vio. Yes; but he mistook me for another—or he was drunk, I know not which.

Fel. And do not you know this Scotch colonel?

Vio. Pray ask me no more questions: this night shall clear my reputation, and leave you without excuse for your base suspicions. More than this I shall not satisfy you, therefore pray leave me.

Fel. Didst thou ever love me, Violante?

Vio. I'll answer nothing——You was in haste to be gone just now; I should be very well pleased to be alone, sir.

[*She sits down, and turns aside.*

Fel. I shall not long interrupt your contemplation.——Stubborn to the last. [*Aside.*

Vio. Did ever woman involve herself as I have done!

Fel. Now would I give one of my eyes to be friends with her, for something whispers to my soul she is not guilty.——[*He pauses, then pulls a chair, and sits by her at a little distance, looking at her some time without speaking, then draws a little nearer to her.*] Give me your hand at parting, however, Violante, won't you—[*He lays his hand upon her knee several times*]—won't you——won't you——won't you?

Vio. [*Half regarding him.*] Won't I do what?

Fel. You know what I would have, Violante. Oh, my heart!

Vio. [*Smiling.*] I thought my chains were easily broke. [*Lays her hand into his.*

Fel. [*Draws his chair close to her, and kisses her hand in a rapture.*] Too well thou knowest thy strength.——Oh, my charming angel! my heart is all thy own. Forgive my hasty passion—'tis the transport of a love sincere. Oh, Violante, Violante!

Don PEDRO *within.*

Ped. Bid Sancho get a new wheel to my chariot presently.

Vio. Bless me, my father returned! What shall we do now, Felix? We are ruined past redemption.

Fel. No, no, no, my love, I can leap from the closet window.

[*Runs to the door where* ISABELLA *is, who claps to the door, and bolts it within-side.*

Isab. [*Peeping.*] Say you so? But I shall prevent you.

Fel. Confusion! Somebody bolts the door within-side. I'll see who you have concealed here, if I die for't Oh, Violante! hast thou again sacrificed me to my rival. [*Draws.*

Vio. By Heaven, thou hast no rival in my heart, let that suffice——Nay, sure you will not let my father find you here——Distraction!

Fel. Indeed but I shall—except you command this door to be opened, and that way conceal me from his sight.

[*He struggles with her to come at the door.*

Vio. Hear me. Felix—— Though I were sure the refusing what you ask would separate us for ever, by all that's powerful, you shall not enter here. Either you do love me, or you do not: convince me by your obedience.

Fel. That's not the matter in debate———I will know who is in this closet, let the consequence be what it will. Nay, nay, you strive in vain: I will go in.

Vio. Thou shalt not go.

Enter Don PEDRO.

Ped. Hey-day! what's here to do? I will go in, and you sha'n't go in—and I will go in——Why, who are you, sir?

Fel. 'Sdeath! what shall I say now?

Ped. Don Felix, pray what's your business in my house? ha, sir?

Vio. Oh, sir, what miracle returned you home so soon? Some angel 'twas that brought my father back to succour the distressed.———This ruffian, he—I cannot call him gentleman—has committed such an uncommon rudeness, as the most profligate wretch would be ashamed to own.

Fel. Ha! what the devil does she mean?

[*Aside.*

Vio. As I was at my devotion in my closet, I heard a loud knocking at my door, mixed with a woman's voice, which seemed to imply she was in danger——

Fel. I am confounded! [*Aside.*

Vio. I flew to the door with the utmost speed, where a lady, veiled, rushed in upon me; who, falling on her knees, begged my protection from a gentleman, who she said pursued her. I took compassion on her tears, and locked her into this closet; but in the surprise having left open the door, this very person whom you see with his sword drawn ran in, protesting, if I did not give her up to his revenge, he'd force the door.

Fel. What, in the name of goodness, does she mean to do? hang me? [*Aside.*

Vio. I strove with him till I was out of breath; and, had you not come as you did, he must have entered——But he's in drink, I suppose, or he could not have been guilty of such an indecorum.

[*Leering at* FELIX.

Ped. I'm amazed!

Fel. The devil never failed a woman at a pinch:—What a tale has she formed in a minute!——In drink, quoth-a! a good hint: I'll lay hold on't to bring myself off. [*Aside.*

Ped. Fie, Don Felix!—no sooner rid of one broil, but you are commencing another.—To assault a lady with a naked sword derogates much from the character of a gentleman, I assure you.

Fel. [*Counterfeits drunkenness.*] Who? I assault a lady!——Upon honour, the lady assaulted me, sir, and would have seized this body politic on the king's highway——Let her come out, and deny it if she can——Pray, sir, command the door to be opened; and let her prove me a liar, if she knows how——I have been drinking Claret, and Champaign, and Burgundy, and other French wines, sir; but I love my own country for all that.

Ped. Ay, ay, who doubts it, sir?—Open the door, Violante, and let the lady come out. Come, I warrant thee he sha'n't hurt her.

Fel. No, no, I won't hurt the dear creature.——Now which way will she come off? [*Aside.*

Vio. [*Unlocks the door.*] Come forth, madam; none shall dare to touch your veil—— I'll convey you out with safety, or lose my life.——I hope she understands me. [*Aside.*

Enter ISABELLA, *veiled, and crosses the stage.*

Isab. Excellent girl! [*Exit.*

Fel. The devil!—a woman!—I'll see if she be really so. [*Aside.*

Vio. [*To* FELIX.] Get clear of my father, and follow me to the Terriero de Passa, where all mistakes shall be rectified. [*Exit with* ISABELLA.

[*Don* FELIX *offers to follow her.*

Ped. [*Drawing his sword.*] Not a step, sir, till the lady is past your recovery; I never suffer the laws of hospitality to be violated in my house, sir.——I'll keep Don Felix here till you see her safe out, Violante.——Come, sir, you and I will take a pipe and a bottle together.

Fel. Damn your pipe, and damn your bottle! I hate drinking and smoking, and how will you help yourself, old whiskers?

Ped. As to smoking or drinking you have your liberty; but you shall stay, sir.

Fel. But I won't stay—for I don't like your company; besides, I have the best reasons in the world for my not staying.

Ped. Ay, what's that?

Fel. Why I am going to be married, and so good bye.

Ped. To be married!—It cann't be. Why, you are drunk, Felix.

Fel. Drunk! ay, to be sure; you don't think I'd go to be married if I were sober——but drunk or sober, I am going to be married, for all that——and if you won't believe me, to convince you, I'll shew you the contract, old gentleman.

Ped. Ay, do; come, let's see this contract, then.

Fel. Yes, yes, I'll shew you the contract—I'll shew you the contract——Here, sir—Here's the contract. [*Draws a pistol.*

Ped. [*Starting.*] Well, well, I'm convinced—Go, go—pray go and be married, sir.

Fel. Yes, yes; I'll go—I'll go and be married; but sha'n't we take a bottle first?

Ped. No, no,—pray, dear sir, go and be married.

Fel. Very well, very well; [*Going*] but I insist upon your taking one glass, though.

Ped. No, not now—some other time—consider the lady waits.

Fel. What a cross old fool! First he will, and then he won't; and then he will, and then he won't. [*Exit.*

Enter Servant.

Serv. Here's Don Lopez de Pimentell to wait on you, signior.

Ped. What the devil does he want? he is not going to be married too——Bring him up; he's in pursuit of his son, I suppose.

Enter Don LOPEZ.

Lop. I am glad to find you at home, Don Pedro; I was told that you was seen upon the road to——this afternoon.

Ped. That might be, my lord; but I had the misfortune to break the wheel of my chariot, which obliged me to return.——What is your pleasure with me, my lord?

Lop. I am informed that my daughter is in your house.

Ped. That's more than I know, my lord; but here was your son, just now, as drunk as an emperor.

Lop. My son drunk!—I never saw him in drink in my life.——Where is he, pray, sir?

Ped. Gone to be married.

Lop. Married!—To whom?—I don't know that he courted any body.

Ped. Nay, I know nothing of that—but I'm sure he shewed me the contract.—Within there!

Enter Servant.

Bid my daughter come hither; she'll tell you another story, my lord.

Serv. She's gone out in a chair, sir.

Ped. Out in a chair!—what do you mean, sir?

Serv. As I say, sir;—and Donna Isabella went in another just before her.

Lop. Isabella!

Serv. And Don Felix followed in another:—I overheard them all bid the chair go to the Terriero de Passa.

Ped. Ha! what business has my daughter there: I am confounded, and know not what to think—Within there! [*Exit.*

Lop. My heart misgives me plagiluy.—Call me an alguazil—I'll pursue them straight. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to the Street before Don* PEDRO'S *House.*

Enter LISSARDO.

Liss. I wish I could see Flora——methinks I have an hankering kindness after the slut——we must be reconciled.

Enter GIBBY.

Gib. Aw my saul, sir, but Ise blithe to find yee here now.

Liss. Ha, brother! give me thy hand, boy.

Gib. No se fast, se ye me——Brether me ne brethers; I scorn a leer as muckle as a thiefe, se ye now, and ye must gang intul this house with me, and justify to Donna Violante's face, that she was the lady that gang'd in here this morn, se ye me, or the deel ha my saul, sir, but ye and I shall be twa folks.

Liss. Justify it to Donna Violante's face, quoth-a! For what? Sure you don't know what you say.

Gib. Troth de I, sir, as weel as yee de: therefore come along, and make na mair words about it.

Liss. Why, what the devil do you mean? Don't you consider you are in Portugal?—Is the fellow mad?

Gib. Fellow! Ise none of yer fellow, sir; and gin the place were hell, I'd gar ye do me justice. [LISSARDO *going.*] Nay, the deel a feet ye gang. [*Lays hold of him, and knocks.*

Liss. Ha! Don Pedro himself: I wish I were fairly off. [*Aside.*

Enter Don PEDRO.

Ped. How now? What makes you knock so loud?

Gib. Gin this be Don Pedro's house, sir, I would speak with Donna Violante, his daughter.

Ped. Ha! what is it you want with my daughter, pray?

Gib. An' she be your daughter, an' lik your honour, command her to come out, and answer for herself now, and either justify or disprove what this chield told me this morn.

Liss. So, here will be a fine piece of work. [*Aside.*

Ped. Why, what did he tell you, ha?

Gib. By my saul, sir, Ise tell you aw the truth.——My master got a pratty lady upon the—how de call't——Passa—here, at five this morn, and he gar me watch her heam——and in troth I lodg'd her here; and meeting this ill-favour'd thiefe, se ye me, I speered wha she was—and he tald me her name was Donna Violante, Don Pedro de Mendosa's daughter.

Ped. Ha! my daughter with a man, abroad at five in the morning! Death, hell, and furies! By Saint Anthony, I'm undone.

Gib. Wounds, sir! ye put yer saint intul bonny company.

Ped. Who is your master, you dog you?—Adsheart, I shall be trick'd of my daughter and money too, that's worst of all.

Gib. You dog you!——'Sbleed, sir! don't call names—I won't tell you who my master is, se ye me now.

Ped. And who are you, rascal, that know my daughter so well? ha! [*Holds up his cane.*

Liss. What shall I say, to make him give this Scotch dog a good beating? [*Aside.*] I know your daughter, signior! Not I; I never saw your daughter in all my life.

Gib. [*Knocks him down with his fist.*] Deel ha my saul, sir, gin ye get no your carich for that lie now.

Ped. What, hoa! where are all my servants?

Enter Colonel, FELIX, ISABELLA, *and* VIOLANTE.

Raise the house in pursuit of my daughter.

Serv. Here she comes, signior.

Col. Hey-day! what's here to do?

Gib. This is the loon-like tik, an' lik your honour, that sent me heam with a lee this morn.

Col. Come, come, 'tis all well, Gibby; let him rise.

Ped. I am thunderstruck—and have no power to speak one word.

Fel. This is a day of jubilee, Lissardo; no quarrelling with him this day.

Liss. A pox take his fists!——'Egad, these Britons are but a word and a blow.

Enter Don LOPEZ.

Lop. So, have I found you, daughter? Then you have not hanged yourself yet, I see.

Col. But she is married, my lord.

Lop. Married! Zounds! to whom?

Col. Even to your humble servant, my lord. If you please to give us your blessing. [*Kneels.*

Lop. Why, hark ye, mistress, are you really married?

Isab. Really so, my lord.

Lop. And who are you, sir?

Col. An honest North-Briton by birth, and a colonel by commission, my lord.

Lop. An heretic! the devil! [*Holding up his hands.*

Ped. She has played you a slippery trick, indeed, my lord.—Well, my girl, thou hast been to see thy friend married—next week thou shalt have a better husband, my dear. [*To* VIOLANTE.

Fel. Next week is a little too soon, sir; I hope to live longer than that.

Ped. What do you mean, sir? You have not made a rib of my daughter too, have you?

Vio. Indeed but he has, sir: I know not how, but he took me in an unguarded minute—when my thoughts were not over-strong for a nunnery, father.

Lop. Your daughter has play'd you a slippery trick too, signior.

Ped. But your son shall never be the better for't, my lord; her twenty thousand pounds were left on certain conditions, and I'll not part with a shilling.

Lop. But we have a certain thing, call'd law, shall make you do justice, sir.

Ped. Well, we'll try that——My lord, much good may it do you with your daughter-in-law. [*Exit.*

Lop. I wish you much joy of your rib. [*Exit.*

Enter FREDERICK.

Fel. Frederick, welcome!—I sent for thee to be partaker of my happiness, and pray give me leave to introduce you to the cause of it.

Fred. Your messenger has told me all, and I sincerely share in all your happiness.

Col. To the right about, Frederick; wish thy friend joy.

Fred. I do with all my soul—and, madam, I congratulate your deliverance.—Your suspicions are clear'd now, I hope, Felix?

Fel. They are, and I heartily ask the colonel pardon, and wish him happy with my sister; for love has taught me to know that every man's happiness consists in choosing for himself.

Liss. After that rule I fix here. [*To* FLORA.

Flo. That's your mistake: I prefer my lady's service, and turn you over to her that pleaded right and title to you to-day.

Liss. Choose, proud fool! I sha'n't ask you twice.

Gib. What say ye now, lass—will ye ge yer hond to poor Gibby?—What say you; will you dance the reel of Bogie with me?

Inis. That I may not leave my lady, I take you at your word; and though our wooing has been short, I'll by her example love you dearly. [*Music plays.*

Fel. Hark, I hear the music; somebody has done us the favour to call them in. [*A country dance.*

Gib. Wounds, this is bonny music!——How caw ye that thing that ye pinch by the craig, and tickle the weamb, and make it cry grum, grum?

Fred. Oh! that's a guitar, Gibby.

Fel. Now, my Violante, I shall proclaim thy virtues to the world.

Let us no more thy sex's conduct blame,
Since thou'rt a proof, to their eternal fame,
That man has no advantage, but the name.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY MR PHILIPS.

CUSTOM, with all our modern laws combin'd,
Has given such power despotic to mankind,
That we have only so much virtue now
As they are pleas'd in favour to allow;
Thus, like mechanic work, we're us'd with scorn,
And wound up only for a present turn.
Some are for having our whole sex enslav'd,
Affirming we've no souls, and cann't be sav'd;*
But were the women all of my opinion,
We'd soon shake off this false, usurp'd dominion;
We'd make the tyrants own that we cou'd prove
As fit for other bus'ness as for love.
Lord! what prerogative might we obtain,
Could we from yielding a few months refrain!
How fondly would our dangling lovers dote!
What homage would be paid to petticoat!
'Twou'd be a jest to see the change of fate;
How might we all of politics debate,
Promise and swear what we ne'er meant to do,
And, what's still harder, Keep our Secrets too.
Ay, marry! Keep a Secret, says a beau,
And sneers at some ill-natur'd wit below;
But, faith, if we should tell but half we know,
There's many a spruce young fellow in this place
Would never more presume to shew his face.
Women are not so weak, whate'er men prate;
How many tip-top beaux have had the fate
T' enjoy from mamma's Secrets their estate!
Who, if her early folly had been known,
Had rid behind the coach that's now their own.
But here the wondrous Secret you discover,—
A lady ventures for a friend—a lover.
Prodigious! for my part, I frankly own,
I'd spoil'd the Wonder, and the woman shown.

* Alluding to an ironical pamphlet tending to prove that women had no souls.

A

BOLD STROKE FOR A WIFE.

BY

Mrs CENTLIVRE.

PROLOGUE.

To-NIGHT we come upon a bold design,
To try to please without one borrow'd line;
Our plot is new, and regularly clear,
And not one single tittle from Moliere.
O'er buried poets we with caution tread,
And parish sextons leave to rob the dead.
For you, bright British fair, in hopes to charm ye,
We bring, to-night, a lover from the army.
You know the soldiers have the strangest arts,
Such a proportion of prevailing parts,
You'd think that they rid post to women's hearts.
I wonder whence they draw their bold pretence;
We do not choose them, sure, for our defence:
That plea is both impolitic and wrong,
And only suits such dames as want a tongue.
Is it their eloquence and fine address?
The softness of their language?—Nothing less.
Is it their courage, that they bravely dare
To storm the sex at once?—'Egad! 'tis there.
They act by us as in the rough campaign,
Unmindful of repulses, charge again:
They mine and countermine, resolved to win,
And, if a breach is made,—they will come in.
You'll think, by what we have of soldiers said,
Our female wit was in the service bred:
But she is to the hardy toil a stranger;
She loves the cloth indeed, but hates the danger:
Yet, to this circle of the brave and gay,
She bid one, for her good intentions, say,
She hopes you'll not reduce her to half-pay.
As for our play, 'tis English humour all:
Then will you let our manufacture fall?
Would you the honour of our nation raise,
Keep English credit up, and English plays.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Colonel FAINWELL, *in love with Mrs Lovely.*
Sir PHILIP MODELOVE, *an old Beau.*
PERIWINKLE, *a kind of silly Virtuoso.*
TRADELOVE, *a 'Change Broker.*
OBADIAH PRIM, *a Quaker Hosier.*
FREEMAN, *the Colonel's friend, a Merchant.*
SIMON PURE, *a quaking Preacher.*
Mr SACKBUT, *a Vintner.*

WOMEN.

Mrs LOVELY, *a Fortune of Thirty Thousand Pounds.*
Mrs PRIM, *Wife to Prim the Hosier.*
BETTY, *Servant to Mrs Lovely.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Tavern.*

Colonel FAINWELL *and* FREEMAN *over a bottle.*

Free. Come, colonel, his majesty's health.—You are as melancholy as if you were in love! I wish some of the beauties of Bath ha'n't snapt your heart.

Col. Why, faith, Freeman, there is something in't; I have seen a lady at Bath, who has kindled such a flame in me, that all the waters there cann't quench.

Free. Women, like some poisonous animals, carry their antidote about 'em——Is she not to be had, colonel?

Col. That's a difficult question to answer; however, I resolve to try: perhaps you may be able to serve me; you merchants know one another—The lady told me herself she was under the charge of four persons.

Free. Odso! 'tis Mrs Anne Lovely.

Col. The same—Do you know her?

Free. Know her! ay.——Faith, colonel, your condition is more desperate than you imagine: Why, she is the talk and pity of the whole town; and it is the opinion of the learned that she must die a maid.

Col. Say you so? That's somewhat odd, in this charitable city.—She's a woman, I hope?

Free. For aught I know,—but it had been as well for her, had nature made her any other part of the creation. The man who keeps this house served her father; he is a very honest fellow, and may be of use to you; we'll send for him to take a glass with us: he'll give you her whole history, and 'tis worth your hearing.

Col. But may one trust him?

Free. With your life: I have obligations enough upon him to make him do any thing: I serve him with wine. [*Knocks.*

Col. Nay, I know him very well myself. I once used to frequent a club that was kept here.

Enter Drawer.

Draw. Gentlemen, d'ye call?

Free. Ay—send up your master.

Draw. Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

Col. Do you know any of this lady's guardians, Freeman?

Free. Yes, I know two of them very well.

Enter SACKBUT.

Free. Here comes one will give you an account of them all.——Mr Sackbut, we sent for you to take a glass with us. 'Tis a maxim among the friends of the bottle, that as long as the master is in company, one may be sure of good wine.

Sack. Sir, you shall be sure to have as good wine as you send in.—Colonel, your most humble servant; you are welcome to town.

Col. I thank you, Mr Sackbut.

Sack. I am as glad to see you as I should a hundred tun of French claret custom free.——My service to you, sir. [*Drinks.*] You don't look so merry as you used to do; ar'n't you well, colonel?

Free. He has got a woman in his head, landlord; can you help him?

Sack. If 'tis in my power, I sha'n't scruple to serve my friend.

Col. 'Tis one perquisite of your calling.

Sack. Ay, at t'other end of the town, where you officers use, women are good forcers of trade: a well-custom'd house, a handsome bar-keeper, with clean obliging drawers, soon get the master an estate; but our citizens seldom do any thing but cheat within the walls.—But as to the lady, colonel, point you at particulars? or have you a good Champagne stomach? Are you in full pay, or reduc'd, colonel.

Col. Reduc'd, reduc'd, landlord.

Free. To the miserable condition of a lover!

Sack. Pish! that's preferable to half-pay: a woman's resolution may break before the peace: push her home, colonel; there's no parlying with the fair sex.

Col. Were the lady her own mistress, I have some reasons to believe I should soon command in chief.

Free. You know Mrs Lovely, Mr Sackbut?

Sack. Know her! Ay, poor Nancy: I have carried her to school many a frosty morning. Alas! if she's the woman, I pity you, colonel: her father, my old master, was the most whimsical, out-of-the-way temper'd man I ever heard of, as you will guess by his last will and testament.—This was his only child, and I have heard him wish her dead a thousand times.

Col. Why so?

Sack. He hated posterity, you must know, and wish'd the world were to expire with himself.—He used to swear, if she had been a boy, he would have qualified him for the opera.

Free. 'Twas a very unnatural resolution in a father.

Sack. He died worth thirty thousand pounds, which he left to his daughter, provided she married with the consent of her guardians; but that she might be sure never to do so, he left her in the care of four men, as opposite to each other as the four elements: each has his quarterly rule; and three months in a year she is oblig'd to be subject to each of their humours; and they are pretty different, I assure you.—She is just come from Bath.

Col. 'Twas there I saw her.

Sack. Ay, sir, the last quarter was her beau guardian's.—She appears in all public places during his reign.

Col. She visited a lady who boarded in the same house with me: I liked her person, and found an

opportunity to tell her so. She replied, she had no objection to mine; but if I could not reconcile contradictions, I must not think of her, for that she was condemned to the caprice of four persons, who never yet agreed in any one thing, and she was obliged to please them all.

Sack. 'Tis most true, sir: I'll give you a short description of the men, and leave you to judge of the poor lady's condition. One is a kind of virtuoso, a silly, half-witted fellow, but positive and surly; fond of every thing antique and foreign, and wears his clothes of the fashion of the last century; doats upon travellers; and believes more of Sir John Mandeville than he does of the Bible.

Col. That must be a rare odd fellow!

Sack. Another is a 'Change broker; a fellow that will out-lie the devil for the advantage of stock, and cheat his father that got him, in a bargain: he is a great stickler for trade, and hates every man that wears a sword.

Free. He is a great admirer of the Dutch management, and swears they understand trade better than any nation under the sun.

Sack. The third is an old beau, that has May in his fancy and dress, but December in his face and his heels: he admires all the new fashions, and those must be French; loves operas, balls, masquerades, and is always the most tawdry of the whole company on a birth-day.

Col. These are pretty opposite to one another, truly:—And the fourth, what is he, landlord?

Sack. A very rigid quaker, whose quarter began this day.—I saw Mrs Lovely go in, not above two hours ago,—Sir Philip set her down. What think you now, colonel; is not the poor lady to be pitied?

Col. Ay, and rescu'd too, landlord.

Free. In my opinion that's impossible.

Col. There is nothing impossible to a lover.—What would not a man attempt for a fine woman and thirty thousand pounds? Besides, my honour is at stake; I promised to deliver her, and she bid me win her and wear her.

Sack. That's fair, faith.

Free. If it depended upon knight-errantry, I should not doubt your setting free the damsel; but to have avarice, impertinence, hypocrisy, and pride at once to deal with, requires more cunning than generally attends a man of honour.

Col. My fancy tells me I shall come off with glory. I am resolved to try, however.—Do you know all the guardians, Mr Sackbut?

Sack. Very well, sir; they all use my house.

Col. And will you assist me, if occasion requires?

Sack. In every thing I can, colonel.

Free. I'll answer for him: and whatever I can serve you in you may depend on. I know Mr Periwinkle and Mr Tradelove; the latter has a very great opinion of my interest abroad.——I happen'd to have a letter from a correspondent two hours before the news arrived of the French king's death: I communicated it to him; upon which he bought all the stock he could; and what with that, and some wagers he laid, he told me he had got to the tune of five hundred pounds; so that I am much in his good graces.

Col. I don't know but you may be of service to me, Freeman.

Free. If I can, command me, colonel.

Col. Isn't it possible to find a suit of clothes ready made, at some of these sale shops, fit to rig out a beau, think you, Mr Sackbut?

Sack. O! hang 'em—No, colonel, they keep nothing ready made that a gentleman would be seen in: but I can fit you with a suit of clothes, if you'd make a figure—velvet and gold brocade—They were pawn'd to me by a French count, who had been stript at play, and wanted money to carry him home: he promised to send for them, but I have not heard any thing of him.

Free. He has not fed upon frogs long enough yet to recover his loss; ha, ha!

Col. Ha, ha! Well, the clothes will do, Mr Sackbut,—though we must have three or four fellows in tawdry liveries; they can be procur'd, I hope.

Free. 'Egad! I have a brother come from the West Indies that can match you; and, for expedition sake, you shall have his servants: there's a black, a tawney Moor, and a Frenchman: they don't speak one word of English, so can make no mistake.

Col. Excellent—'Egad! I shall look like an Indian prince.—First, I'll attack my beau guardian; where lives he?

Sack. Faith, somewhere about St James's, tho' to say in what street I cannot; but any chairman will tell you where Sir Philip Modelove lives.

Free. Oh! you'll find him in the Park at eleven every day; at least, I never pass through at that hour without seeing him there.—But what do you intend?

Col. To address him in his own way, and find what he designs to do with the lady.

Free. And what then?

Col. Nay, that I cann't tell; but I shall take my measures accordingly.

Sack. Well, 'tis a mad undertaking in my mind: but here's to your success, colonel. [*Drinks.*

Col. 'Tis something out of the way, I confess; but Fortune may chance to smile, and I succeed.—Come, landlord, let me see those clothes.—Freeman, I shall expect you'll leave word with Mr Sackbut where one may find you upon occasion; and send me my Indian equipage immediately, d'ye hear?

Free. Immediately. [*Exit.*

Col. Bold was the man who ventur'd first to sea,
But the first vent'ring lovers bolder were.
The path of love's a dark and dang'rous way,
Without a land-mark, or one friendly star,
And he that runs the risk deserves the fair.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—PRIM'S *House.*

Enter Mrs LOVELY *and her maid* BETTY.

Betty. Bless me, madam! Why do you fret

and tease yourself so? This is giving them the advantage with a witness.

Mrs Lov. Must I be condemned all my life to the preposterous humours of other people, and pointed at by every boy in town?—Oh! I could tear my flesh, and curse the hour I was born——Isn't it monstrously ridiculous, that they should desire to impose their quaking dress upon me at these years! When I was a child, no matter what they made me wear, but now——

Betty. I would resolve against it, madam; I'd see 'em hang'd before I'd put on the pinch'd cap again.

Mrs Lov. Then I must never expect one moment's ease: she has rung such a peal in my ears already, that I sha'n't have the right use of them this month.——What can I do?

Betty. What can you not do, if you will but give your mind to it? Marry, madam.

Mrs Lov. What! and have my fortune go to build churches and hospitals?

Betty. Why, let it go.——If the colonel loves you as he pretends, he'll marry you without a fortune, madam; and I assure you a colonel's lady is no despicable thing; a colonel's post will maintain you like a gentlewoman, madam.

Mrs Lov. So you would advise me to give up my own fortune, and throw myself upon the colonel's?

Betty. I would advise you to make yourself easy, madam.

Mrs Lov. That's not the way, I'm sure. No, no, girl, there are certain ingredients to be mingled with matrimony, without which I may as well change for the worse as the better. When the woman has fortune enough to make the man happy, if he has either honour or good manners, he'll make her easy. Love makes but a slovenly figure in a house where Poverty keeps the door.

Betty. And so you resolve to die a maid, do you, madam.

Mrs Lov. Or have it in my power to make the man I love master of my fortune.

Betty. Then you don't like the colonel so well as I thought you did, madam, or you would no take such a resolution.

Mrs Lov. It is because I do like him, Betty, that I do take such a resolution.

Betty. Why, do you expect, madam, the colonel can work miracles? Is it possible for him to marry you with the consent of all your guardians?

Mrs Lov. Or he must not marry me at all: and so I told him; and he did not seem displeased with the news.——He promised to set me free; and I, on that condition, promised to make him master of that freedom.

Betty. Well, I have read of enchanted castles, ladies delivered from the chains of magic, giants kill'd, and monsters overcome; so that I shall be the less surprised if the colonel should conjure you out of the power of your four guardians; if he does, I am sure he deserves your fortune.

Mrs Lov. And shall have it, girl, if it were ten times as much—For I'll ingenuously confess to thee, that I do like the colonel above all the men I ever saw:—There's something so *jantee* in a soldier, a kind of *je-ne-sçai-quoi* air, that makes them more agreeable than the rest of mankind.—They command regard; as who shall say, We are your defenders; we preserve your beauties from the insults of rude and unpolish'd foes, and ought to be preferr'd before those lazy, indolent mortals, who, by dropping into their fathers' estates, set up their coaches, and think to rattle themselves into our affections.

Betty. Nay, madam, I confess that the army has engrossed all the prettiest fellows—A laced coat and a feather have irresistible charms.

Mrs Lov. But the colonel has all the beauties of the mind as well as the body.—O! all ye powers that favour happy lovers, grant that he may be mine! Thou god of Love, if thou be'st aught but name, assist my Fainwell!

Point all thy darts to aid his just design,
And make his plots as prevalent as thine.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Park.*

Enter Colonel, finely dressed, three Footmen after him.

Col. So, now if I can but meet this beau!—'Egad! methinks I cut a smart figure, and have as much of the tawdry air as any Italian count or French marquis of them all.——Sure I shall know this knight again—Ah! yonder he sits, making love to a mask, i'faith. I'll walk up the Mall, and come down by him. [*Exit.*

Scene draws, and discovers Sir PHILIP *upon a Bench, with a Woman mask'd.*

Sir Phil. Well, but, my dear, are you really constant to your keeper?

Wom. Yes, really, sir.—Hey-day! Who comes yonder? He cuts a mighty figure.

Sir Phil. Ha! a stranger, by his equipage keeping so close at his heels.—He has the appearance of a man of quality.—Positively French, by his dancing air.

Wom. He crosses, as if he meant to sit down here.

Sir Phil. He has a mind to make love to thee, child.

Enter Colonel, and seats himself upon the Bench by Sir PHILIP.

Wom. It will be to no purpose, if he does.

Sir Phil. Are you resolved to be cruel then?

Col. You must be very cruel indeed, if you

can deny any thing to so fine a gentleman, madam. [*Takes out his watch.*

Wom. I never mind the outside of a man.

Col. And I'm afraid thou art no judge of the inside.

Sir Phil. I am positively of your mind, sir; for creatures of her function seldom penetrate beyond the pocket.

Wom. Creatures of your composition have, indeed, generally more in their pockets than in their heads. [*Aside.*

Sir Phil. Pray what says your watch? mine is down. [*Pulling out his watch.*

Col. I want thirty-six minutes of twelve, sir.—[*Puts up his watch, and takes out his snuff-box.*

Sir Phil. May I presume, sir?——

Col. Sir, you honour me. [*Presenting the box.*

Sir Phil. He speaks good English—though he must be a foreigner. [*Aside.*]—This snuff is extremely good,—and the box prodigious fine; the work is French, I presume, sir.

Col. I bought it in Paris, sir——I do think the workmanship pretty neat.

Sir Phil. Neat! 'tis exquisitely fine, sir. Pray, sir, if I may take the liberty of enquiring—what country is so happy to claim the birth of the finest gentleman in the universe? France, I presume.

Col. Then you don't think me an Englishman?

Sir Phil. No, upon my soul, don't I.

Col. I am sorry for't.

Sir Phil. Impossible you should wish to be an Englishman! Pardon me, sir; this island could not produce a person of such alertness.

Col. As this mirror shews you, sir.

[*Puts up a pocket glass to Sir* PHILIP's *face.*

Wom. Coxcombs! I'm sick to hear them praise one another. One seldom gets any thing by such animals; not even a dinner, unless one can dine upon soup and celery.

Sir Phil. O Gad, sir!—Will you leave us, madam? Ha, ha! [*Exit Wom.*

Col. She fears 'twill be only losing time to stay here; ha, ha!——I know not how to distinguish you, sir, but your mien and address speak you right honourable.

Sir Phil. Thus great souls judge of others by themselves—I am only adorn'd with knighthood, that's all, I assure you, sir: my name is Sir Philip Modelove.

Col. Of French extraction?

Sir Phil. My father was French.

Col. One may plainly perceive it—There is a certain gaiety peculiar to my nation (for I will own myself a Frenchman) which distinguishes us every where—A person of your figure would be a vast addition to a coronet.

Sir Phil. I must own I had the offer of a barony about five years ago, but I abhorr'd the fatigue which must have attended it. I could never yet bring myself to join with either party.

Col. You are perfectly in the right, Sir Philip—a fine person should not embark himself in the slovenly concern of politics; dress and pleasure are objects proper for the soul of a fine gentleman.

Sir Phil. And love.

Col. Oh! that's included under the article of pleasure.

Sir Phil. *Parbleu il est un homme d'esprit.*——I must embrace you—[*Rises and embraces.*]—Your sentiments are so agreeable to mine, that we appear to have but one soul, for our ideas and conceptions are the same.

Col. I should be sorry for that. [*Aside.*]—You do me too much honour, Sir Philip.

Sir Phil. Your vivacity and jantee mien assured me, at first sight, there was nothing of this foggy island in your composition. May I crave your name, sir?

Col. My name is La Fainwell, sir, at your service.

Sir Phil. The La Fainwells are French, I know, tho' the name is become very numerous in Great Britain of late years—I was sure you was French the moment I laid my eyes upon you; I could not come into the supposition of your being an Englishman: this island produces few such ornaments.

Col. Pardon me, Sir Philip; this island has two things superior to all nations under the sun.

Sir Phil. Ah! what are they?

Col. The ladies and the laws.

Sir Phil. The laws, indeed, do claim a preference of other nations,—but, by my soul, there are fine women every where—I must own I have felt their power in all countries.

Col. There are some finish'd beauties, I confess, in France, Italy, Germany, nay, even in Holland, *mais elles sont bien rare:* but *les belles Angloises!* Oh, Sir Philip, where find we such women! such symmetry of shape! such elegancy of dress! such regularity of features! such sweetness of temper! such commanding eyes! and such bewitching smiles!

Sir Phil. Ah!—*Parbleu vous etes attrapé.*

Col. *Non, je vous assure, chevalier.*——But I declare there is no amusement so agreeable to my *goût* as the conversation of a fine woman.—I could never be prevailed upon to enter into what the vulgar call the pleasures of the bottle.

Sir Phil. My own taste, *positivement*—A ball, or a masquerade, is certainly preferable to all the productions of the vineyard.

Col. Infinitely! I hope the people of quality in England will support that branch of pleasure, which was imported with their peace, and since naturaliz'd by the ingenious Mr Heidegger.

Sir Phil. The ladies assure me it will become part of the constitution—upon which I subscrib'd a hundred guineas—It will be of great service to the public, at least to the company of surgeons, and the city in general.

Col. Ha, ha! it may help to ennoble the blood of the city. Are you married, Sir Philip?

Sir Phil. No; nor do I believe I ever shall enter into that honourable state; I have an absolute *tendre* for the whole sex.

Col. That's more than they have for you, I dare swear. [*Aside.*

Sir Phil. And I have the honour to be very well with the ladies, I can assure you, sir: and I

won't affront a million of fine women to make one happy.

Col. Nay, marriage is reducing a man's taste to a kind of half pleasure; but then it carries the blessings of peace along with it; one goes to sleep without fear, and wakes without pain.

Sir Phil. There's something of that in't; a wife is a good dish for an English stomach,—but gross feeding for nicer palates; ha, ha, ha!

Col. I find I was very much mistaken—I imagined you had been married to that young lady whom I saw in the chariot with you this morning in Grace-church Street.

Sir Phil. Who? Nancy Lovely? I am a piece of a guardian to that lady: you must know, her father, I thank him, joined me with three of the most preposterous old fellows—that, upon my soul, I am in pain for the poor girl;—she must certainly lead apes, as the saying is; ha, ha!

Col. That's pity, Sir Philip. If the lady would give me leave, I would endeavour to avert that curse.

Sir Phil. As to the lady, she'd gladly be rid of us at any rate, I believe; but here's the mischief—he who marries Miss Lovely must have the consent of us all four,—or not a penny of her portion.—For my part, I shall never approve of any but a man of figure,——and the rest are not only averse to cleanliness, but have each a peculiar taste to gratify.—For my part, I declare I would prefer you to all the men I ever saw.

Col. And I her to all women.

Sir Phil. I assure you, Mr Fainwell, I am for marrying her, for I hate the trouble of a guardian, especially among such wretches, but resolve never to agree to the choice of any one of them, —and I fancy they'll be even with me; for they never came into any proposal of mine yet.

Col. I wish I had your leave to try them, Sir Philip.

Sir Phil. With all my soul, sir; I can refuse a person of your appearance nothing.

Col. Sir, I am infinitely obliged to you.

Sir Phil. But do you really like matrimony?

Col. I believe I could with that lady.

Sir Phil. The only point in which we differ—But you are master of so many qualifications, that I can excuse one fault; for I must think it a fault in a fine gentleman; and that you are such, I'll give it under my hand.

Col. I wish you'd give me your consent to marry Mrs Lovely under your hand, Sir Philip.

Sir Phil. I'll do't, if you'll step into St James's coffee-house, where we may have pen and ink,—though I cann't foresee what advantage my consent will be to you, without you could find a way to get the rest of the guardians.—But I'll introduce you, however.—She is now at a quaker's where I carried her this morning, when you saw us in Grace-church Street.—I assure you she has an odd ragout of guardians, as you will find when you hear the characters, which I'll endeavour to give you as we go along.—Hey! Pierre, Jacque, Renno,—where are you all, scoundrels?—Order the chariot to St James's coffee-house.

Col. *Le Noir, la Brun, la Blanc.—Morbleu, ou sont ces coquins la? Allons, Monsieur le Chevalier.*

Sir Phil. Ah! *Pardonnez moi, monsieur.*

Col. Not one step, upon my soul, Sir Philip.

Sir Phil. The best bred man in Europe, positively. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* OBADIAH PRIM'S *House.*

Enter Mrs LOVELY, *followed by Mrs* PRIM.

Mrs Pr. Then thou wilt not obey me: and thou dost really think those fallals become thee?

Mrs Lov. I do, indeed.

Mrs Pr. Now will I be judged by all sober people, if I don't look more like a modest woman than thou dost, Anne.

Mrs Lov. More like a hypocrite you mean, Mrs Prim.

Mrs Pr. Ah! Anne, Anne, that wicked Philip Modelove will undo thee.—Satan so fills thy heart with pride, during the three months of his guardianship, thou becomest a stumbling-block to the upright.

Mrs Lov. Pray who are they? Are the pinch'd cap and formal hood the emblems of sanctity? Does your virtue consist in your dress, Mrs Prim?

Mrs Pr. It doth not consist in cut hair, spotted face, and a bare neck.—Oh! the wickedness of the generation! The primitive women knew not the abomination of hoop'd petticoats.

Mrs Lov. No, nor the abomination of cant neither.——Don't tell me, Mrs Prim, don't.—I know you have as much pride, vanity, self-conceit, and ambition among you, couched under that formal habit and sanctified countenance, as the proudest of us all; but the world begins to see your prudery.

Mrs Pr. Prudery! What! do they invent new words as well as new fashions? Ah! poor fantastic age, I pity thee—Poor deluded Anne, which dost thou think most resemblest the saint, and which the sinner, thy dress or mine? Thy naked bosom allureth the eye of the by-stander—encourageth the frailty of human nature—and corrupteth the soul with evil longings.

Mrs Lov. And pray who corrupted your son Tobias with evil longings? Your maid Tabitha wore a handkerchief, and yet she made the saint a sinner.

Mrs Pr. Well, well, spit thy malice. I confess Satan did buffet my son Tobias and my servant Tabitha; the evil spirit was at that time too strong, and they both became subject to its workings,—not from any outward provocation,—but from an inward call: he was not tainted with the rottenness of the fashions, nor did his eyes take in the drunkenness of beauty.

Mrs Lov. No! that's plainly to be seen.

Mrs Pr. Tabitha is one of the faithful; he fell not with a stranger.

Mrs Lov. So! Then you hold wenching no crime, provided it be within the pale of your own tribe.——You are an excellent casuist, truly.

Enter OBADIAH PRIM.

Ob. Pr. Not stripp'd of thy vanity yet, Anne! —Why dost thou not make her put it off, Sarah?

Mrs Pr. She will not do it.

Ob. Pr. Verily, thy naked breasts troubleth my outward man; I pray thee hide 'em, Anne: put on an handkerchief, Anne Lovely.

Mrs Lov I hate handkerchiefs when 'tis not cold weather, Mr Prim.

Mrs Pr. I have seen thee wear a handkerchief, nay, and a mask to boot, in the middle of July.

Mrs Lov. Ay, to keep the sun from scorching me.

Ob. Pr. If thou couldst not bear the sun-beams, how dost thou think man can bear thy beams? Those breasts inflame desire: Let them be hid, I say.

Mrs Lov. Let me be quiet, I say.—Must I be tormented thus for ever? Sure no woman's condition ever equalled mine! Foppery, folly, avarice, and hypocrisy, are, by turns, my constant companions,—and I must vary shapes as often as a player—I cannot think my father meant this tyranny! No, you usurp an authority which he never intended you should take.

Ob. Pr. Hark thee: Dost thou call good counsel tyranny? Do I or my wife tyrannize, when we desire thee, in all love, to put off thy tempting attire, and veil thy provokers to sin?

Mrs Lov. Deliver me, good Heaven! or I shall go distracted. [*Walks about.*

Mrs Pr. So! now thy pinners are tost, and thy breasts pulled up!——Verily, they were seen enough before.——Fie upon the filthy tailor who made thy stays.

Mrs Lov. I wish I were in my grave! Kill me rather than treat me thus.

Ob. Pr. Kill thee! Ha, ha! thou thinkest thou art acting some lewd play, sure:—Kill thee! Art thou prepared for death, Anne Lovely? No, no, thou wouldst rather have a husband, Anne:—thou wantest a gilt coach, with six lazy fellows behind, to flaunt it in the ring of vanity, among the princes and rulers of the land—who pamper themselves with the fatness thereof: but I will take care that none shall squander away thy father's estate: thou shalt marry none such, Anne.

Mrs Lov. Would you marry me to one of your own canting sect?

Ob. Pr. Yea, verily, no one else shall ever get my consent, I do assure thee, Anne.

Mrs Lov. And I do assure thee, Obadiah, that I will as soon turn papist, and die in a convent.

Mrs Pr. Oh, wickedness!

Mrs Lov. Oh, stupidity!

Ob. Pr. Oh, blindness of heart!

Mrs Lov. Thou blinder of the world, don't provoke me,—lest I betray your sanctity, and leave your wife to judge of your purity:—What were the emotions of your spirit—when you squeez'd Mary by the hand last night in the pantry,—when she told you you buss'd so filthily? Ah! you had no aversion to naked bosoms, when you begged her to shew you a little, little, little bit of her delicious bubby:—Don't you remember those words, Mr Prim?

Mrs Pr. What does she say, Obadiah?

Ob. Pr. She talketh unintelligibly, Sarah.—— Which way did she hear this? This should not have reached the ears of the wicked ones:—verily, it troubleth me. [*Aside.*

Enter Servant.

Serv. Philip Modelove, whom they call Sir Philip, is below, and such another with him; shall I send them up?

Ob. Pr. Yea. [*Exit Serv.*

Enter Sir PHILIP *and Colonel.*

Sir Phil. How dost thou do, friend Prim?—Odso! my she-friend here too?—What, are you documenting Miss Nancy? reading her a lecture upon the pinch'd coif, I warrant ye.

Mrs Pr. I am sure thou didst never read her any lecture that was good.—My flesh riseth so at these wicked ones, that prudence adviseth me to withdraw from their sight. [*Exit.*

Col. Oh! that I could find means to speak with her! How charming she appears! I wish I could get this letter into her hand. [*Aside.*

Sir Phil. Well, Miss Cockey, I hope thou hast got the better of them.

Mrs Lov. The difficulties of my life are not to be surmounted, Sir Philip.——I hate the impertinence of him as much as the stupidity of the other. [*Aside.*

Ob. Pr. Verily, Philip, thou wilt spoil this maiden.

Sir Phil. I find we still differ in opinion; but that we may none of us spoil her, pr'ythee, Prim, let us consent to marry her.—I have sent for our brother guardians to meet me here about this very thing—Madam, will you give me leave to recommend a husband to you?—Here's a gentleman, whom, in my mind, you can have no objection to. [*Presents the Colonel to her; she looks another way.*

Mrs Lov. Heaven deliver me from the formal and the fantastic fool!

Col. A fine woman, a fine horse, and fine equipage, are the finest things in the universe: and if I am so happy to possess you, madam, I shall become the envy of mankind, as much as you outshine your whole sex. [*As he takes her hand, to kiss it, he endeavours to put a letter into it; she lets it drop*——PRIM *takes it up.*

Mrs Lov. I have no ambition to appear conspicuously ridiculous, sir. [*Turning from him.*

Col. So fail the hopes of Fainwell.

Mrs Lov. Ha! Fainwell!—'Tis he!—What have I done? Prim has the letter, and it will be discover'd. [*Aside.*

Ob. Pr. Friend, I know not thy name, so cannot call thee by it; but thou seest thy letter is unwelcome to the maiden; she will not read it.

Mrs Lov. Nor shall you: [*Snatches the letter*] I'll tear it in a thousand pieces, and scatter it, as I will the hopes of all those that any of you shall recommend to me. [*Tears the letter.*

Sir Phil. Ha! Right woman, faith!

Col. Excellent woman! [*Aside.*

Ob. Pr. Friend, thy garb savoureth too much of the vanity of the age for my approbation; nothing that resembleth Philip Modelove shall I love; mark that;——therefore, friend Philip, bring no more of thy own apes under my roof.

Sir Phil. I am so entirely a stranger to the monsters of thy breed, that I shall bring none of them, I am sure.

Col. I am likely to have a pretty task by that time I have gone thro' them all; but she's a city worth taking, and, 'egad, I'll carry on the siege; if I can but blow up the out-works, I fancy I am pretty secure of the town. [*Aside.*

Enter Servant.

Serv. Toby Periwinkle and Thomas Tradelove demand to see thee. [*To Sir* PHILIP.

Sir Phil. Bid them come up.

Mrs Lov. Deliver me from such an inundation of noise and nonsense—Oh, Fainwell! whatever thy contrivance be, prosper it Heaven;—but oh! I fear thou never canst redeem me. [*Exit.*

Sir Phil. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*——

Enter Mr PERIWINKLE *and* TRADELOVE.

These are my brother guardians, Mr Fainwell; pr'ythee observe the creatures. [*Aside to Col.*

Trade. Well, Sir Philip, I obey your summons.

Per. Pray, what have you to offer for the good of Mrs Lovely, Sir Philip?

Sir Phil. First, I desire to know what you intend to do with that lady? Must she be sent to the Indies for a venture—or live an old maid, and then be enter'd amongst your curiosities, and shewn for a monster, Mr Periwinkle?

Col. Humph! Curiosities! That must be the virtuoso. [*Aside.*

Per. Why, what would you do with her?

Sir Phil. I would recommend this gentleman to her for a husband, sir—a person whom I have pick'd out from the whole race of mankind.

Ob. Pr. I would advise thee to shuffle him again with the rest of mankind, for I like him not.

Col. Pray, sir, without offence to your formality, what may be your objections?

Ob. Pr. Thy person, thy manners, thy dress, thy acquaintance,—thy every thing, friend.

Sir Phil. You are most particularly obliging, friend; ha, ha!

Trade. What business do you follow, pray, sir?

Col. Humph! By that question he must be the broker. [*Aside.*]—Business, sir! the business of a gentleman.

Trade. That is as much as to say, you dress fine, feed high, lie with every woman you like, and pay your surgeon's bills better than your tailor's or your butcher's.

Col. The court is much obliged to you, sir, for your character of a gentleman.

Trade. The court, sir! What would the court do without us citizens?

Sir Phil. Without your wives and daughters, you mean, Mr Tradelove.

Per. Have you ever travell'd, sir?

Col. That question must not be answered now ——In books I have, sir.

Per. In books! That's fine travelling indeed! ——Sir Philip, when you present a person I like, he shall have my consent to marry Mr Lovely; till then, your servant. [*Exit.*

Col. I'll make you like me before I have done with you, or I am mistaken. [*Aside.*

Trade. And when you can convince me that a beau is more useful to my country than a merchant, you shall have mine; 'till then, you must excuse me. [*Exit.*

Col. So much for trade—I'll fit you too. [*Aside.*

Sir Phil. In my opinion, this is very inhuman treatment, as to the lady, Mr Prim.

Ob. Pr. Thy opinion and mine happens to differ as much as our occupations, friend: business requireth my presence, and folly thine; and so I must bid thee farewell. [*Exit.*

Sir Phil. Here's breeding for you, Mr Fainwell!—Gad take me,

Half my estate I'd give to see 'em bit.

Col. I hope to bite you all, if my plot hit.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Tavern.*

SACKBUT, *and the Colonel, in an Egyptian Dress.*

Sack. A lucky beginning, colonel——You have got the old beau's consent.

Col. Ay, he's a reasonable creature; but the other three will require some pains—Shall I pass upon him, think you? 'Egad, in my mind, I look as antique as if I had been preserved in the ark.

Sack. Pass upon him! ay, ay, as roundly as white wine dashed with sack does for mountain and sherry, if you have assurance enough.

Col. I have no apprehension from that quarter; assurance is the cockade of a soldier.

Sack. Ay, but the assurance of a soldier differs much from that of a traveller.—Can you lie with a good grace?

Col. As heartily, when my mistress is the prize, as I would meet the foe when my country called

and king commanded; so don't you fear that part; if he don't know me again, I am safe.——I hope he'll come.

Sack. I wish all my debts would come as sure. I told him you had been a great traveller, had many valuable curiosities, and was a person of a most singular taste; he seemed transported, and begged me to keep you till he came.

Col. Ay, ay, he need not fear my running away. —Let's have a bottle of sack, landlord; our ancestors drank sack.

Sack. You shall have it.

Col. And whereabouts is the trap-door you mentioned?

Sack. There's the conveyance, sir. [*Exit.*

Col. Now, if I should cheat all these roguish guardians, and carry off my mistress in triumph, it would be what the French call a *grand coup d'eclat*—Odso! here comes Periwinkle.——Ah! Deuce take this beard; pray Jupiter it does not give me the slip, and spoil all.

Enter SACKBUT *with wine, and* PERIWINKLE *following.*

Sack. Sir, this gentleman, hearing you have been a great traveller, and a person of fine speculation, begs leave to take a glass with you; he is a man of a curious taste himself.

Col. The gentleman has it in his face and garb. —Sir, you are welcome.

Per. Sir, I honour a traveller, and men of your enquiring disposition. The oddness of your habit pleases me extremely; 'tis very antique, and for that I like it.

Col. 'Tis very antique, sir:—This habit once belonged to the famous Claudius Ptolemeus, who lived in the year one hundred and thirty-five.

Sack. If he keeps up to the sample, he shall lie with the devil for a bean-stack, and win it every straw. [*Aside.*

Per. A hundred and thirty-five? Why, that's prodigious now!—Well, certainly 'tis the finest thing in the world to be a traveller.

Col. For my part, I value none of the modern fashions a fig-leaf.

Per. No more don't I, sir. I had rather be the jest of a fool than his favourite.—I am laughed at here for my singularity——This coat, you must know, sir, was formerly worn by that ingenious and very learned person, Mr John Tradescant of Lambeth

Col. John Tradescant! Let me embrace you, sir —John Tradescant was my uncle, by my mother's side; and I thank you for the honour you do his memory: He was a very curious man indeed.

Per. Your uncle, sir!—Nay, then, 'tis no wonder that your taste is so refined: Why, you have it in your blood.—My humble service to you, sir: —To the immortal memory of John Tradescant, your never to-be-forgotten uncle. [*Drinks.*

Col. Give me a glass, landlord.

Per. I find you are primitive, even in your wine. Canary was the drink of our wise forefathers; 'tis balsamic, and saves the charge of 'pothecaries cordials—Oh! that I had lived in your uncle's days; or, rather, that he were now alive!—Oh! how proud he'd be of such a nephew!

Sack. Oh, pox! that would have spoil'd the jest. [*Aside.*

Per. A person of your curiosity must have collected many rarities.

Col. I have some, sir, which are not yet come a-shore; as an Egyptian idol.

Per. Pray, what may that be?

Col. It is, sir, a kind of an ape, which they formerly worshipped in that country: I took it from the breast of a female mummy.

Per. Ha, ha! our women retain part of their idolatry to this day; for many an ape lies on a lady's breast; ha, ha!

Sack. A smart old thief. [*Aside.*

Col. Two tusks of an hippopotamus, two pair of Chinese nut-crackers, and one Egyptian mummy.

Per. Pray, sir, have you never a crocodile?

Col. Humph! the boatswain brought one with a design to shew it; but touching at Rotterdam, and hearing it was no rarity in England, he sold it to a Dutch poet.

Sack. The devil's in that nation, it rivals us in every thing.

Per. I should have been very glad to have seen a living crocodile.

Col. My genius led me to things more worthy of regard——Sir, I have seen the utmost limits of this globular world: I have seen the sun rise and set, know in what degree of heat he is in at noon, to the breadth of a hair, and what quantity of combustibles he burns in a day, and how much of it turns to ashes and how much to cinders.

Per. To cinders! You amaze me, sir. I never heard that the sun consumed any thing. Descartes tells us———

Col. Descartes, with the rest of his brethren, both ancient and modern, knew nothing of the matter. I tell you, sir, that nature admits an annual decay, though imperceptible to vulgar eyes. —Sometimes his rays destroy below, sometimes above.—You have heard of blazing comets, I suppose?

Per. Yes, yes; I remember to have seen one; and our astrologers tell us of another which will happen very quickly.

Col. Those comets are little islands bordered on the sun, which at certain times are set on fire by that luminous body's moving over them perpendicular, which will one day occasion a general conflagration.

Sack. One need not scruple the colonel's capacity, faith. [*Aside.*

Per. This is marvellous strange! These cinders are what I never read of in any of our learned dissertations.

Col. I don't know how the devil you should. [*Aside.*

Sack. He has it at his fingers ends: One would swear he had learned to lie at school, he does it so cleverly. [*Aside.*

Per. Well, you travellers see strange things! —Pray, sir, have you any of those cinders?

Col. I have, among my other curiosities.

Per. Oh, what have I lost for want of travelling! Pray, what have you else?

Col. Several things worth your attention.—I have a muff made of the feathers of those geese that saved the Roman capitol.

Per. Is't possible?

Sack. Yes, if you are such a gander as to believe him. [*Aside.*

Col. I have an Indian leaf, which, open, will cover an acre of land, yet folds up in so little a compass, you may put it into your snuff-box.

Sack. Humph! That's a thunderer. [*Aside.*

Per. Amazing!

Col. Ah! mine is but a little one: I have seen some of them that would cover one of the Caribbee Islands.

Per. Well, if I don't travel before I die, I sha'n't rest in my grave—Pray, what do the Indians with them?

Col. Sir, they use them in their wars for tents, the old women for riding-hoods, the young for fans and umbrellas.

Sack. He has a fruitful invention. [*Aside.*

Per. I admire our East India Company imports none of them; they would certainly find their account in them.

Col. Right, if they could find the leaves. [*Aside.* ——Look ye, sir, do you see this little phial?

Per. Pray you, what is it?

Col. This is called Poluflosboio.

Per. Poluflosboio!—It has a rumbling sound.

Col. Right, sir: it proceeds from a rumbling nature. This water was part of those waves which bore Cleopatra's vessel when she sailed to meet Anthony.

Per. Well, of all that ever travelled, none had a taste like you.

Col. But here's the wonder of the world.—— This, sir, is called Zona, or Moros Musphonon: the virtues of this are inestimable.

Per. Moros Musphonon! What, in the name of wisdom, can that be?—To me it seems a plain belt.

Col. This girdle has carried me all the world over.

Per. You have carried it, you mean.

Col. I mean as I say, sir.—Whenever I am girded with this, I am invisible, and, by turning this little screw, can be in the court of the Great Mogul, the Grand Signior, and King George, in as little time as your cook can poach an egg.

Per. You must pardon me, sir; I cann't believe it.

Col. If my landlord pleases, he shall try the experiment immediately.

Sack. I thank you kindly, sir, but I have no inclination to ride post to the devil.

Col. No, no, you sha'n't stir a foot; I'll only make you invisible.

Sack. But if you could not make me visible again?

Per. Come, try it upon me, sir; I am not afraid of the devil, nor all his tricks.—'Sbud!—I'll stand 'em all.

Col. There, sir, put it on.—Come, landlord, you and I must face the east. [*They turn about.*] Is it on, sir?

Per. 'Tis on. [*They turn about again.*

Sack. Heaven protect me! where is he?

Per. Why here, just where I was.

Sack. Where, where, in the name of virtue?— Ah, poor Mr Periwinkle!—'Egad, look to't; you had best, sir, and let him be seen again, or I shall have you burnt for a wizard.

Col. Have patience, good landlord.

Per. But, really, don't you see me now?

Sack. No more than I see my grandmother, that died forty years ago.

Per. Are you sure you don't lie? Methinks I stand just where I did, and see you as plain as I did before.

Sack. Ah! I wish I could see you once again.

Col. Take off the girdle, sir. [*He takes it off.*

Sack. Ah, sir, I am glad to see you with all my heart. [*Embraces him.*

Per. This is very odd; certainly there must be some trick in't.——Pray, sir, will you do me the favour to put it on yourself.

Col. With all my heart.

Per. But first I'll secure the door.

Col. You know how to turn the screw, Mr Sackbut?

Sack. Yes, yes.——Come, Mr Periwinkle, we must turn full east.

[*They turn, the Colonel sinks down the trap-door.*

Col. 'Tis done; now turn. [*They turn.*

Per. Ha! mercy upon me; my flesh creeps upon my bones.——This must be a conjuror, Mr Sackbut.

Sack. He is the devil, I think.

Per. O, Mr Sackbut, why do you name the devil, when perhaps he may be at your elbow?

Sack. At my elbow! Marry! Heaven forbid.

Col. Are you satisfied? [*From under the stage.*

Per. Yes, sir, yes——How hollow his voice sounds!

Sack. Yours seem'd just the same——Faith, I wish this girdle were mine; I'd sell wine no more. Hark ye, Mr Periwinkle, [*Takes him aside till the Colonel rises again*] if he would sell this girdle, you might travel with great expedition.

Col. But it is not to be parted with for money.

Per. I am sorry for't, sir, because I think it the greatest curiosity I ever heard of.

Col. By the advice of a learned physiognomist in Grand Cairo, who consulted the lines in my face, I returned to England, where he told me I should find a rarity in the keeping of *four* men, which I was born to possess for the benefit of mankind; and the *first* of the *four* that gave me his consent, I should present him with this girdle: Till I have found this jewel I shall not part with the girdle.

Per. What can that rarity be? Didn't he name it to you?

Col. Yes, sir; he called it a chaste, beautiful, unaffected woman.

Per. Pish! Women are no rarities——I never had any great taste that way. I married, indeed, to please my father, and I got a girl to please my wife; but she and the child (thank Heaven) died together——Women are the very gewgaws of the creation; play-things for boys, who, when they write man, they ought to throw aside.

Sack. A fine lecture to be read to a circle of ladies! [*Aside.*

Per. What woman is there, dressed in all the pride and foppery of the times, can boast of such a foretop as the cockatoo?

Col. I must humour him—[*Aside.*]—Such a skin as the lizard?

Per. Such a shining breast as the humming-bird?

Col. Such a shape as the antelope?

Per. Or, in all the artful mixture of their various dresses, have they half the beauty of one box of butterflies?

Col. No, that must be allow'd—For my part, if it were not for the benefit of mankind, I'd have nothing to do with them; for they are as indifferent to me as a sparrow or a flesh-fly.

Per. Pray, sir, what benefit is the world to reap from this lady?

Col. Why, sir, she is to bear me a son, who shall revive the art of embalming, and the old Roman manner of burying their dead; and, for the benefit of posterity, he is to discover the longitude, so long sought for in vain.

Per. Od! these are valuable things, Mr Sackbut!

Sack. He hits it off admirably, and t'other swallows it like sack and sugar—[*Aside.*]—Certainly this lady must be your ward, Mr Periwinkle, by her being under the care of four persons.

Per. By the description it should——'Egad, if I could get that girdle, I'd ride with the sun, and make the tour of the world in four-and-twenty hours.—[*Aside.*]—And are you to give that girdle to the first of the four guardians that shall give his consent to marry that lady, say you, sir?

Col. I am so ordered, when I can find him.

Per. I fancy I know the very woman—her name is Anne Lovely?

Col. Excellent!—He said, indeed, that the first letter of her name was L.

Per. Did he really?——Well, that's prodigiously amazing, that a person in Grand Cairo should know any thing of my ward.

Col. Your ward!

Per. To be plain with you, sir, I am one of those four guardians.

Col. Are you, indeed, sir? I am transported to find the man who is to possess this Moros Musphonon is a person of so curious a taste—Here is a writing, drawn up by that famous Egyptian, which if you will please to sign, you must turn your face full north, and the girdle is yours.

Per. If I live till this boy is born, I'll be embalm'd, and sent to the Royal Society when I die.

Col. That you shall, most certainly.

Enter Drawer.

Draw. Here's Mr Staytape the tailor enquires for you, colonel.

Col. Who do you speak to, you son of a whore?

Per. Ha! colonel! [*Aside.*

Col. Confound the blundering dog! [*Aside.*

Draw. Why, to Colonel——

Sack. Get you out, you rascal.

[*Kicks him out, and goes after him.*

Draw. What the devil is the matter?

Col. This dog has ruin'd all my schemes, I see by Periwinkle's looks. [*Aside.*

Per. How finely I should have been chous'd—Colonel, you'll pardon me that I did not give you your title before—it was pure ignorance, faith it was——Pray—hem, hem! Pray, colonel, what post had this learned Egyptian in your regiment?

Col. A pox of your sneer! [*Aside.*] I don't understand you, sir.

Per. No! that's strange! I understand you, colonel——An Egyptian of Grand Cairo! ha, ha, ha!—I am sorry such a well-invented tale should do you no more service——We old fellows can see as far into a millstone as them that pick it—I am not to be trick'd out of my trust—mark that.

Col. The devil! I must carry it off. I wish I were fairly out. [*Aside.*] Look ye, sir, you may make what jest you please—but the stars will be obey'd, sir; and, depend upon't, I shall have the lady, and you none of the girdle.—Now for Mr Freeman's part of the plot. [*Aside.*] [*Exit.*

Per. The stars! ha, ha!—No star has favoured you, it seems——The girdle! ha, ha, ha! None of your legerdemain tricks can pass upon me——Why, what a pack of trumpery has this rogue picked up—His Pagod, Poluflosboio, his Zonas, Moros Musphonons, and the devil knows what——But I'll take care——Ha! gone!—Ay, 'twas time to sneak off.——Soho! the house! [*Enter* SACKBUT.] Where is this trickster? Send for a constable: I'll have this rascal before the lord-mayor: I'll Grand Cairo him, with a pox to him——I believe you had a hand in putting this imposture upon me, Sackbut.

Sack. Who? I, Mr Periwinkle? I scorn it. I perceived he was a cheat, and left the room on purpose to send for a constable to apprehend him, and endeavour'd to stop him when he went out—But the rogue made but one step from the stairs to the door, call'd a coach, leap'd into it, and drove away like the devil, as Mr Freeman can witness, who is at the bar, and desires to speak with you: he is this minute come to town.

Per. Send him in. [*Exit* SACKBUT.] What a scheme this rogue has laid! How I should have been laugh'd at, had it succeeded!

Enter FREEMAN, *booted and spurred.*

Mr Freeman, your dress commands your welcome to town. What will you drink? I had like to have been impos'd upon here by the veriest rascal.

Free. I am sorry to hear it—the dog flew for't: He had not 'scap'd me, if I had been aware of him: Sackbut struck at him, but miss'd his blow, or he had done his business for him.

Per. I believe you never heard of such a contrivance, Mr Freeman, as this fellow had found out.

Free. Mr Sackbut has told me the whole story,

Mr Periwinkle; but now I have something to tell you of much more importance to yourself.——I happen'd to lie one night at Coventry, and knowing your uncle Sir Toby Periwinkle, I paid him a visit, and, to my great surprise, found him dying.

Per. Dying!

Free. Dying, in all appearance; the servants weeping, the room in darkness: the 'pothecary, shaking his head, told me the doctors had given him over; and then there are small hopes, you know.

Per. I hope he made his will—He always told me he would make me his heir.

Free. I have heard you say as much, and therefore resolv'd to give you notice. I should think it would not be amiss if you went down to-morrow morning.

Per. It is a long journey, and the roads very bad.

Free. But he has a great estate, and the land very good——Think upon that.

Per. Why, that's true, as you say: I'll think upon it: In the mean time, I give you many thanks for your civility, Mr Freeman, and should be glad of your company to dine with me.

Free. I am oblig'd to be at Jonathan's coffee-house at two, and now it is half an hour after one: if I dispatch my business, I'll wait on you: I know your hour.

Per. You shall be very welcome, Mr Freeman, and so your humble servant. [*Exit.*

Re-enter Colonel and SACKBUT.

Free. Ha, ha, ha! I have done your business, colonel: he has swallow'd the bait.

Col. I overheard all, though I am a little in the dark. I am to personate a highwayman, I suppose—That's a project I am not fond of; for though I may fright him out of his consent, he may fright me out of my life, when he discovers me, as he certainly must in the end.

Free. No, no, I have a plot for you without danger; but first we must manage Tradelove—Has the tailor brought your clothes?

Sack. Yes, pox take the thief!

Free. Well, well, no matter: I warrant we have him yet—But now you must put on the Dutch merchant.

Col. The deuce of this trading plot—I wish he had been an old soldier, that I might have attack'd him in my own way, heard him fight o'er all the battles of the late war—But for trade, by Jupiter, I shall never do it.

Sack. Never fear, colonel: Mr Freeman will instruct you.

Free. You'll see what others do:—the coffee-house will instruct you.

Col. I must venture, however——But I have a farther plot in my head upon Tradelove, which you must assist me in, Freeman: You are in credit with him, I heard you say.

Free. I am, and will scruple nothing to serve you, colonel.

Col. Come along then—Now for the Dutchman——Honest Ptolomy. By your leave.

Now must bag-wig and bus'ness come in play:
A thirty thousand pound girl leads the way.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Jonathan's Coffee-house, in 'Change-Alley. A crowd of People, with Rolls of Paper and Parchment in their Hands; a Bar, and Coffee-Boys waiting.*

Enter TRADELOVE *and Stock-jobbers, with rolls of Paper and Parchment.*

1*st Stock.* South-sea, at seven-eighths; who buys?

2*d Stock.* South-sea bonds, due at Michaelmas, 1718. Class lottery-tickets?

3*d Stock.* East India bonds?

4*th Stock.* What, all sellers and no buyers? Gentlemen, I'll buy a thousand pound for Tuesday next, at three-fourths.

Coff.-Boy. Fresh coffee, gentlemen, fresh coffee!

Trade. Hark ye, Gabriel, you'll pay the difference of that stock we transacted for t'other day.

Gab. Ay, Mr Tradelove, here's a note for the money upon the Sword-Blade Company.
[*Gives him a note.*

Coff.-Boy. Bohea tea, gentlemen!

Enter a Man.

Man. Is Mr Smuggle here?

1*st Coff.-Boy.* Mr Smuggle's not here, sir: you'll find him at the books.

2*d Stock.* Ho! here comes two sparks from t'other end of the town; what news bring they?

Enter two Gentlemen.

Trade. I would fain bite the spark in the brown coat; he comes very often into the Alley, but never employs a broker.

Enter Colonel and FREEMAN.

2*d Stock.* Who does any thing in the Civil List lottery? or Caco?—Zounds! where are all the Jews this afternoon?—Are you a bull or a bear to-day, Abraham?

3*d Stock.* A bull, faith—but I have a good put for next week.

Trade. Mr Freeman, your servant!—Who is that gentleman?

Free. A Dutch merchant just come to England.—But hark ye, Mr Tradelove—I have a piece of news will get you as much as the French king's death did, if you are expeditious. [*Shewing him a letter.*] Read there: I received it just now from one that belongs to the emperor's minister.

Trade. [*Reads.*] "Sir, as I have many obligations to you, I cannot miss any opportunity to shew my gratitude. This moment my lord has receiv'd a private express, that the Spaniards have rais'd their siege from before Cagliari:—If this proves any advantage to you, it will answer both the ends and wishes of, sir, your most obliged humble servant. HENRICUS DUSSELDORP.

Postscript

In two or three hours the news will be public."

——May one depend upon this, Mr Freeman?

[*Aside to* FREEMAN.

Free. You may—I never knew this person send me a false piece of news in my life.

Trade. Sir, I am much obliged to you. 'Egad, 'tis rare news——Who sells South Sea for next week?

Stock-job. [*All together.*] I sell; I, I, I, I, I sell.

1*st Stock.* I'll sell 5000*l.* for next week, at five-eighths.

2*d Stock.* I'll sell ten thousand, at five-eighths, for the same time.

Trade. Nay, nay; hold, hold; not all together, gentlemen: I'll be no bull: I'll buy no more than I can take. Will you sell ten thousand pounds at a half, for any day next week, except Saturday?

1*st Stock.* I'll sell it you, Mr Tradelove.

Free. [*Whispers to one of the gentlemen.*]

1*st Gent.* [*Aside.*] The Spaniards rais'd the siege of Cagliari! I don't believe one word of it.

2*d Gent.* Rais'd the siege! As much as you have rais'd the monument.

Free. 'Tis rais'd, I assure you, sir.

2*d Gent.* What will you lay on't?

Free. What you please.

1*st Gent.* Why, I have a brother upon the spot, in the emperor's service: I am certain if there were any such thing, I should have had a letter.

2*d Stock.* How's this? The siege of Cagliari rais'd!—I wish it may be true: 'twill make business stir, and stocks rise.

1*st Stock.* Tradelove's a cunning fat bear: If this news prove true, I shall repent I sold him the five thousand pounds.——Pray, sir, what assurance have you that the siege is rais'd?

Free. There is come an express to the emperor's minister.

2*d Stock.* I'll know that presently.

1*st Gent.* Let it come where it will, I'll hold you fifty pounds 'tis false.

Free. 'Tis done.

2*d Gent.* I'll lay you a brace of hundreds upon the same.

Free. I'll take you.

4*th Stock.* 'Egad, I'll hold twenty pieces 'tis not rais'd, sir.

Free. Done with you too.

Trade. I'll lay any man a brace of thousands the siege is rais'd.

Free. The Dutch merchant is your man to take in. [*Aside to* TRADELOVE.

Trade. Does not he know the news?

Free. Not a syllable: if he did, he would bet a hundred thousand pounds as soon as one penny:—he's plaguy rich, and a mighty man at wagers. [*To* TRADELOVE.

Trade. Say you so—'Egad, I'll bite him if possible.——Are you from Holland, sir?

Col. Ya, mynheer.

Trade. Had you the news before you came away?

Col. What believe you, mynheer?

Trade. What do I believe? Why I believe that the Spaniards have actually rais'd the siege of Cagliari.

Col. What duyvel's news is dat? 'Tis niet waer, mynheer——'tis no true, sir.

Trade. 'Tis so true, mynheer, that I'll lay you two thousand pounds upon it.——You are sure the letter may be depended upon, Mr Freeman?

Free. Do you think I would venture my money, if I were not sure of the truth of it?

[*Aside to* TRADE.

Col. Two duysend pound, mynheer; 'tis gadaen—dis gentleman sal hold de gelt.

[*Gives* FREE. *money.*

Trade. With all my heart—this binds the wager.

Free. You have certainly lost, mynheer: the siege is rais'd indeed.

Col. Ik gelov't niet, Mynheer Freeman; ik sal ye dubbled honden, if you please.

Free. I am let into the secret, therefore won't win your money.

Trade. Ha, ha, ha! I have snapt the Dutchman, faith; ha, ha! This is no ill day's work.—Pray, may I crave your name, mynheer?

Col. Myn naem, mynheer! Myn naem is Jan Van Timtamtirelireletta Heer Fainwell

Trade. Zounds! 'tis a damn'd long name; I shall never remember it—Myn heer Van, Tim, Tim, Tim,———What the devil is it?

Free. Oh! never heed; I know the gentleman, and will pass my word for twice the sum.

Trade. That's enough.

Col. You'll hear of me sooner than you'll wish, old gentleman, I fancy. [*Aside.*] You'll come to Sackbut's, Freeman. [*Exit.*

Free. Immediately. [*Aside to the Colonel.*

1*st Man.* Humphry Hump here?

2*d Boy.* Mr Humphry Hump is not here: you'll find him upon the Dutch walk.

Trade. Mr Freeman, I give you many thanks for your kindness.

Free. I fear you'll repent, when you know all. [*Aside.*

Trade. Will you dine with me?

Free. I'm engag'd at Sackbut's. Adieu. [*Exit.*

Trade. Sir, your humble servant. Now I'll see what I can do upon 'Change with my news. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The Tavern.*

Enter FREEMAN *and Colonel.*

Free. Ha, ha, ha! The old fellow swallowed the bait as greedily as a gudgeon.

Col. I have him, faith; ha, ha, ha!—his two thousand pounds secure——If he would keep his money, he must part with the lady; ha, ha, ha! ——What came of your two friends? They performed their part very well: You should have brought 'em to take a glass with us.

Free. No matter; we'll drink a bottle together another time.—I did not care to bring them hither: there's no necessity to trust them with the main secret, you know, colonel.

Col. Nay, that's right, Freeman.

Enter SACKBUT.

Sack. Joy, joy, colonel! The luckiest accident in the world!

Col. What say'st thou?

Sack. This letter does your business.

Col. [*Reads.*] "To Obadiah Prim, hosier, near the building call'd the Monument, in London."

Free. A letter to Prim! How came you by it?

Sack. Looking over the letters our post-woman brought, as I always do, to see what letters are directed to my house, (for she cann't read, you must know,) I spy'd this directed to Prim, so paid for it among the rest. I have given the old jade a pint of wine on purpose to delay time, till you see if the letter be of any service; then I'll seal it up again, and tell her I took it by mistake:—I have read it, and fancy you'll like the project.—Read, read, colonel.

Col. [*Reads.*] "Friend Prim, there is arrived from Pennsylvania one Simon Pure, a leader of the faithful, who hath sojourned with us eleven days, and hath been of great comfort to the brethren—He intendeth for the quarterly meeting in London. I have recommended him to thy house. I pray thee treat him kindly, and let thy wife cherish him, for he's of weakly constitution—— He will depart from us the third day: Which is all from thy friend in the faith,

AMINADAB HOLDFAST."

Ha, ha! excellent! I understand you, landlord—I am to personate this Simon Pure, am I not?

Sack. Don't you like the hint?

Col. Admirably well!

Free. 'Tis the best contrivance in the world, if the right Simon gets not there before you.

Col. No, no; the quakers never ride post: he cann't be here before to-morrow, at soonest.—Do you send and buy me a quaker's dress, Mr Sackbut; and suppose, Freeman, you should wait at the Bristol coach, that if you see any such person, you might contrive to give me notice.

Free. I will—The country dress and boots, are they ready?

Sack. Yes, yes, every thing, sir.

Free. Bring 'em in then.—[*Exit* SACK.] Thou must dispatch Periwinkle first—Remember his uncle, Sir Toby Periwinkle, is an old batchelor of seventy-five—that he has seven hundred a-year, most in abbey land—that he was once in love with your mother, shrewdly suspected by some to be your father—that you have been thirty years his steward—and ten years his gentleman—Remember to improve these hints.

Col. Never fear; let me alone for that—But what's the steward's name?

Free. His name is Pillage.

Col. Enough—[*Enter* SACKBUT *with clothes.*] —Now for the country put. [*Dresses.*

Free. 'Egad, landlord, thou deservest to have the first night's lodging with the lady, for thy fidelity:—What say you, colonel: shall we settle a club here? You'll make one?

Col. Make one! I'll bring a set of honest officers, that will spend their money as freely to the king's health, as they would their blood in his service.

Sack. I thank you, colonel.—Here, here.—— [*Bell rings.*] [*Exit* SACKBUT.

Col. So, now for my boots. [*Puts on boots.*]— Shall I find you here, Freeman, when I come back?

Free. Yes,—or I'll leave word with Sackbut where he may send for me—Have you the writings, the will—and every thing?

Col. All, all.

Enter SACKBUT.

Sack. 'Zounds! Mr Freeman! yonder is Tradelove in the damned'st passion in the world—He swears you are in the house—he says you told him you were to dine here.

Free. I did so; ha, ha, ha! He has found himself bit already.

Col. The devil! He must not see me in this dress.

Sack. I told him I expected you here, but you were not come yet.

Free. Very well—Make you haste out, colonel, and let me alone to deal with him.—Where is he?

Sack. In the King's Head.

Col. You remember what I told you?

Free. Ay, ay, very well.——Landlord, let him know I am come in—and now, Mr Pillage, success attend you. [*Exit* SACK.

Col. Mr Proteus rather.——

From changing shape, and imitating Jove,
I draw the happy omens of my love.
I'm not the first young brother of the blade,
Who made his fortune in a masquerade.
[*Exit Colonel.*

Enter TRADELOVE.

Free. 'Zounds! Mr Tradelove, we're bit, it seems.

Trade. Bit, do you call it, Mr Freeman! I am ruin'd.—Pox on your news.

Free. Pox on the rascal that sent it me.

Trade. Sent it you! Why, Gabriel Skinflint has been at the minister's, and spoke with him, and he has assur'd him 'tis every syllable false: he receiv'd no such express.

Free. I know it: I this minute parted with my friend, who protested he never sent me any such letter—Some roguish stock-jobber has done it, on purpose to make me lose my money, that's certain: I wish I knew who he was; I'd make him repent it.—I have lost 300*l.* by it.

Trade. What signifies your three hundred pounds to what I have lost? There's two thousand pounds to that Dutchman with a cursed long name, besides the stock I bought.—The devil! I could tear my flesh.—I must never shew my face upon 'Change more;—for, by my soul, I cann't pay it.

Free. I am heartily sorry for it! What can I serve you in? Shall I speak to the Dutch merchant, and try to get you time for the payment?

Trade. Time! Ads'heart, I shall never be able to look up again.

Free. I am very much concerned that I was the occasion, and wish I could be an instrument of retrieving your misfortune: for my own, I value it not. Adso! a thought comes into my head, that, well improved, may be of service.

Trade. Ah! there's no thought can be of any service to me, without paying the money, or running away.

Free. How do we know? What do you think of my proposing Mrs Lovely to him? He is a single man—and I heard him say he had a mind to marry an English woman—nay, more than that, he said somebody told him you had a pretty ward—he wish'd you had betted her instead of your money.

Trade. Ay, but he'd be hang'd before he'd take her instead of the money: the Dutch are too covetous for that: besides, he did not know that there were three more of us, I suppose.

Free. So much the better. You may venture to give him your consent, if he'll forgive you the wager: it is not your business to tell him that your consent will signify nothing.

Trade. That's right, as you say; but will he do it, think you?

Free. I cann't tell that; but I'll try what I can do with him——He has promis'd to meet me here an hour hence: I'll feel his pulse, and let you know: if I find it feasible, I'll send for you; if not, you are at liberty to take what measures you please.

Trade. You must extol her beauty, double her portion, and tell him I have the entire disposal of her, and that she cann't marry without my consent;—and that I am a covetous rogue, and will never part with her without a valuable consideration.

Free. Ay, ay, let me alone for a lie at a pinch.

Trade. 'Egad, if you can bring this to bear, Mr Freeman, I'll make you whole again: I'll pay the three hundred pounds you lost with all my soul.

Free. Well, I'll use my best endeavours——Where will you be?

Trade. At home.—Pray Heaven you prosper—If I were but the sole trustee now, I should not fear it.—Who the devil would be a guardian—If, when cash runs low, our coffers t' enlarge,
We cann't, like other stocks, transfer our charge?
[*Exit.*

Free. Ha, ha, ha!—he has it. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to* PERIWINKLE'S *House.*

Enter PERIWINKLE *on one side, and Footman on the other.*

Foot. A gentleman from Coventry enquires for you, sir.

Per. From my uncle, I warrant you.—Bring him up—This will save me the trouble, as well as the expence of a journey.

Enter Colonel.

Col. Is your name Periwinkle, sir?

Per. It is, sir.

Col. I am sorry for the message I bring—My old master, whom I served these forty years, claims the sorrow due from a faithful servant to an indulgent master. [*Weeps.*

Per. By this I understand, sir, my uncle, Sir Toby Periwinkle, is dead.

Col. He is, sir, and he has left you heir to seven hundred a-year, in as good abbey-land as ever paid Peter-pence to Rome.——I wish you long to enjoy it; but my tears will flow when I think of my benefactor.—[*Weeps.*] Ah! he was a good man—he has not left many of his fellows—the poor lament him sorely.

Per. I pray, sir, what office bore you?

Col. I was his steward, sir.

Per. I have heard him mention you with much respect: Your name is——

Col. Pillage, sir.

Per. Ay, Pillage; I do remember he call'd you Pillage.——Pray, Mr Pillage, when did my uncle die?

Col. Monday last, at four in the morning. About two he sign'd his will, and gave it into my hands, and strictly charged me to leave Coventry the moment he expired, and deliver it to you with what speed I could. I have obeyed him, sir; and there is the will. [*Gives it to* PER.

Per. 'Tis very well: I'll lodge it in the Commons.

Col. There are two things which he forgot to insert, but charg'd me to tell you that he desir'd you'd perform them as readily as if you had found them written in the will, which is, to remove his corpse, and bury him by his father at St Paul's, Covent-Garden, and to give all his servants mourning.

Per. That will be a considerable charge.—A pox of all modern fashions! [*Aside.*]—Well, it shall be done. Mr Pillage, I will agree with one of Death's fashion-mongers, call'd an undertaker, to go down, and bring up the body.

Col. I hope, sir, I shall have the honour to serve you in the same station I did your worthy uncle: I have not many years to stay behind him, and would gladly spend them in the family where I was brought up—[*Weeps.*]—He was a kind and tender master to me.

Per. Pray don't grieve, Mr Pillage: you shall hold your place, and every thing else which you held under my uncle——You make me weep to see you so concern'd. [*Weeps.*]—He liv'd to a good old age, and we are all mortal.

Col. We are so, sir, and therefore I must beg you to sign this lease: you'll find Sir Toby has taken particular notice of it in his will——I could not get it time enough from the lawyer, or he had sign'd it before he died. [*Gives him a paper.*

Per. A lease! for what?

Col. I rented a hundred a-year of Sir Toby upon lease, which lease expires at Lady-day next. I desire to renew it for twenty years—that's all, sir.

Per. Let me see. [*Looks over the lease.*

Col. Matters go swimmingly, if nothing intervene. [*Aside.*

Per. Very well—Let's see what he says in his will about it.

[*Lays the lease upon the table, and looks on the will.*

Col. He's very wary, yet I fancy I shall be too cunning for him. [*Aside.*

Per. Ho, here it is—The farm lying—now in possession of Samuel Pillage—suffer him to renew his lease—at the same rent.—— Very well, Mr Pillage, I see my uncle does mention it, and I'll perform his will. Give me the lease—[*Col. gives it him; he looks upon it, and lays it upon the table.*] Pray you step to the door, and call for a pen and ink, Mr Pillage.

Col. I have a pen and ink in my pocket, sir: [*Pulls out an ink-horn:*] I never go without that.

Per. I think it belongs to your profession—[*He looks upon the pen, while the Col. changes the lease, and lays down the contract.*] I doubt this is but a sorry pen, though it may serve to write my name. [*Writes.*

Col. Little does he think what he signs. [*Aside.*

Per. There is your lease, Mr Pillage. [*Gives him the paper.*] Now I must desire you to make what haste you can down to Coventry, and take care of every thing, and I'll send down the undertaker for the body; do you attend it up, and whatever charge you are at, I'll repay you.

Col. You have paid me already, I thank you, sir. [*Aside.*

Per. Will you dine with me?

Col. I would rather not: there are some of my neighbours which I met as I came along, who leave the town this afternoon, they told me, and I should be glad of their company down.

Per. Well, well, I won't detain you.

Col. I don't care how soon I am out. [*Aside.*

Per. I will give orders about mourning.

Col. You will have cause to mourn, when you know your estate imaginary only. [*Aside.*

You'll find your hopes and cares alike are vain:
In spite of all the caution you have ta'en,
Fortune rewards the faithful lover's pain. [*Exit.*

Per. Seven hundred a-year!—I wish he had died seventeen years ago:—What a valuable collection of rarities might I have had by this time!—I might have travell'd over all the known parts of the globe, and made my own closet rival the Vatican at Rome.——Odso, I have a good mind to begin my travels now.———Let me see—— I am but sixty! My father, grandfather, and great grandfather, reach'd ninety odd.—I have almost forty years good.———Let me consider! What will seven hundred a-year amount to in—ay, in thirty years, I'll say but thirty—— Thirty times seven, is seven times thirty——that is——just twenty-one thousand pounds:—'Tis a great deal of money.——I may very well reserve sixteen hundred of it for a collection of such rarities as will make my name famous to posterity:——I would not die like other mortals, forgotten in a year or two, as my uncle will be———No,

With Nature's curious works I'll raise my fame,
That men, till doom's-day, may repeat my name.
[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*Changes to a Tavern.*

FREEMAN *and* TRADELOVE *over a bottle.*

Trade. Come, Mr Freeman, here's Mynheer Jan Van Tim, Tam, Tam——I shall never think of that Dutchman's name.

Free. Mynheer Jan Van Timtamtirelireletta Heer Van Fainwell.

Trade. Ay, Heer Van Fainwell. I never heard such a confounded name in my life—Here's his health, I say.

Free. With all my heart.

Trade. Faith, I never expected to have found so generous a thing in a Dutchman.

Free. Oh, he has nothing of the Hollander in his temper——except an antipathy to monarchy. ——As soon as I told him your circumstances, he reply'd, he would not be the ruin of any man for the world—and immediately made this proposal himself—Let him take what time he will for the payment, said he; or if he'll give me his ward, I'll forgive him the debt.

Trade. Well, Mr Freeman, I can but thank you.—'Egad, you have made a man of me again! and if ever I lay a wager more, may I rot in a gaol.

Free. I assure you, Mr Tradelove, I was very much concern'd, because I was the occasion—— though very innocently, I protest.

Trade. I dare swear you was, Mr Freeman.

Enter a Fiddler.

Fid. Please to have a lesson of music, or a song, gentlemen?

Free. Song? Ay, with all our hearts: have you a very merry one?

Fid. Yes, sir, my wife and I can give you a merry dialogue. [*Here is the song.*

Trade. 'Tis very pretty, faith.

Free. There's something for you to drink, friend: go; lose no time.

Fid. I thank you, sir. [*Exit.*

Enter Drawer, and Colonel, dressed for the Dutch Merchant.

Col. Ha, Mynheer Tradelove, Ik ben sorry voor your troubles—maer Ik sal you easie maken, Ik will de gelt nie haben.

Trade I shall for ever acknowledge the obligation, sir.

Free. But you understand upon what condition, Mr Tradelove:—Mrs Lovely.

Col. Ya, de frow sal al te regt setten, mynheer.

Trade. With all my heart, mynheer: you shall have my consent to marry her freely.

Free. Well, then, as I am a party concern'd between you, Mynheer Jan Van Timtamtirelireletta Heer Van Fainwell shall give you a discharge of your wager, under his own hand,—and you shall give him your consent to marry Mrs Lovely under yours,——that is the way to avoid all manner of disputes hereafter.

Col. Ya, weeragtig.

Trade. Ay, ay, so it is, Mr Freeman: I'll give it under mine this minute. [*Sits down to write.*

Col. And so Ik sal. [*Does the same.*

Free. So ho! the house! [*Enter Drawer.*] Bid your master come up——I'll see there be witnesses enough to the bargain. [*Aside.*

Enter SACKBUT.

Sack. Do you call, gentlemen?

Free. Ay, Mr Sackbut; we shall want your hand here.

Trade. There, mynheer, there's my consent, as amply as you can desire; but you must insert your own name, for I know not how to spell it; I have left a blank for it.

[*Gives the Colonel a paper.*

Col. Ya Ik sal dat well doen.

Free. Now, Mr Sackbut, you and I will witness it. [*They write.*

Col. Daer, Mynheer Tradelove, is your discharge. [*Gives him a paper.*

Trade. Be pleas'd to witness this receipt too, gentlemen.

[FREEMAN *and* SACKBUT *put their hands.*

Free. Ay, ay, that we will.

Col. Well, mynheer, ye most meer doen, ye most myn voorsprach to de frow syn.

Free. He means you must recommend him to the lady.

Trade. That I will, and to the rest of my brother guardians.

Col. Wat, vour, de duyvel, heb you meer guardians?

Trade. Only three, mynheer.

Col. What donder heb ye myn betrocken, mynheer?——Had Ik dat gewoeten, Ik soude eaven met you geweest syn.

Sack. But Mr Tradelove is the principal, and he can do a great deal with the rest, sir.

Free. And he shall use his interest, I promise you, mynheer.

Trade. I will say all that ever I can think on to recommend you, mynheer; and, if you please, I'll introduce you to the lady.

Col. Well, dat is waer——Maer ye must first spreken of myn to de frow, and to oudore gentlemen.

Free. Ay, that's the best way,—and then I and the Heer Van Fainwell will meet you there.

Trade. I will go this moment, upon honour—— Your most obedient humble servant.———My speaking will do you little good, mynheer; ha, ha! We have bit you, faith; ha, ha!

Well—my debt's discharged, and for the man,
He has my consent—to get her, if he can.

[*Exit.*

Col. Ha, ha, ha! this was a masterpiece of contrivance, Freeman.

Free. He hugs himself with his supposed good fortune, and little thinks the luck's on our side! ——But come, pursue the fickle goddess while she's in the mood——Now for the quaker.

Col. That's the hardest task.

Of all the counterfeits perform'd by man,
A soldier makes the simplest puritan. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—PRIM'S *House.*

Enter Mrs PRIM *and Mrs* LOVELY, *in Quakers' dresses, meeting.*

Mrs Pr. So, now I like thee, Anne. Art thou not better without thy monstrous hoop-coat and patches?—If Heaven should make thee so many black spots upon thy face, would it not fright thee, Anne?

Mrs Lov. If it should turn your inside outward, and shew all the spots of your hypocrisy, 'twould fright me worse!

Mrs Pr. My hypocrisy! I scorn thy words, Anne: I lay no baits.

Mrs Lov. If you did, you'd catch no fish.

Mrs Pr. Well, well, make thy jests—but I'd have thee to know, Anne, that I could have catch'd as many fish (as thou call'st them) in my time, as ever thou did'st, with all thy fool-traps about thee —If admirers be thy aim, thou wilt have more of them in this dress than the other—The men, take my word for't, are more desirous to see what we are most careful to conceal.

Mrs Lov. Is that the reason of your formality, Mrs Prim? Truth will out.—I ever thought, in-

deed, there was more design than goodness in the pinch'd cap.

Mrs Pr. Go; thou are corrupted with reading lewd plays and filthy romances——good for nothing but to lead youth into the high road of fornication.——Ah! I wish thou art not already too familiar with the wicked ones.

Mrs Lov. Too familiar with the wicked ones! Pray, no more of those freedoms, madam—I am familiar with none so wicked as yourself—How dare you thus talk to me! you, you, you unworthy woman you. [*Bursts into tears.*

Enter TRADELOVE.

Trade. What, in tears, Nancy? What have you done to her, Mrs Prim, to make her weep?

Mrs Lov. Done to me! I admire I keep my senses among you;—but I will rid myself of your tyranny, if there be either law or justice to be had:—I'll force you to give me up my liberty.

Mrs Pr. Thou hast more need to weep for thy sins, Anne,—yea, for thy manifold sins.

Mrs Lov. Don't think that I'll be still the fool which you have made me.—No, I'll wear what I please—go when and where I please—and keep what company I think fit, and not what you shall direct——I will.

Trade. For my part, I do think all this very reasonable, Mrs Lovely—'tis fit you should have your liberty, and for that very purpose I am come.

Enter Mr PERIWINKLE, *and* OBADIAH PRIM, *with a letter in his hand.*

Per. I have bought some black stockings of your husband, Mrs Prim; but he tells me the glover's trade belongs to you; therefore I pray you look me out five or six dozen of mourning gloves, such as are given at funerals, and send them to my house.

Ob. Pr. My friend Periwinkle has got a good wind-fall to-day—seven hundred a-year.

Mrs Pr. I wish thee joy of it, neighbour.

Trade. What, is Sir Toby dead then?

Per. He is!—You'll take care, Mrs Prim.

Mrs Pr. Yea, I will, neighbour.

Ob. Pr. This letter recommendeth a speaker: 'tis from Aminadab Holdfast of Bristol: peradventure he will be here this night; therefore, Sarah, do thou take care for his reception.

[*Gives her the letter.*

Mrs Pr. I will obey thee. [*Exit.*

Ob. Pr. What art thou in the dumps for, Anne?

Trade. We must marry her, Mr Prim.

Ob. Pr. Why, truly, if we could find a husband worth having, I should be as glad to see her married as thou wouldst, neighbour.

Per. Well said: there are but few worth having.

Trade. I can recommend you a man now, that I think you can none of you have an objection to.

Enter Sir PHILIP MODELOVE.

Per. You recommend! Nay, whenever she marries, I'll recommend the husband.

Sir Phil. What must it be? A whale or a rhinoceros, Mr Periwinkle? ha, ha, ha! Mr Tradelove, I have a bill upon you, [*Gives him a paper*] and have been seeking for you all over the town.

Trade. I'll accept it, Sir Philip, and pay it when due.

Per. He shall be none of the fops at your end of the town, with full perukes and empty skulls—nor yet any of your trading gentry, who puzzle the heralds to find arms for their coaches.—No, he shall be a man famous for travels, solidity, and curiosity—one who has searched into the profundity of nature! When Heaven shall direct such a one, he shall have my consent, because it may turn to the benefit of mankind.

Mrs Lov. The benefit of mankind! What, would you anatomize me?

Sir Phil. Ay, ay, madam he would dissect you.

Trade. Or pore over you through a microscope, to see how your blood circulates, from the crown of your head to the sole of your foot——ha, ha! But I have a husband for you; a man that knows how to improve your fortune; one that trades to the four corners of the globe.

Mrs Lov. And would send me for a venture perhaps.

Trade. One that will dress you in all the pride of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America—a Dutch merchant, my girl.

Sir Phil. A Dutchman! ha, ha! There's a husband for a fine lady.——Ya frow, will you meet myn slapen—ha, ha! He'll learn you to talk the language of the hogs, madam; ha, ha!

Trade. He'll learn you that one merchant is of more service to a nation than fifty coxcombs.—The Dutch know the trading interest to be of more benefit to the state than the landed.

Sir Phil. But what is either interest to a lady?

Trade. 'Tis the merchant makes the belle——How would the ladies sparkle in the box without the merchant? The Indian diamond! The French brocade! The Italian fan! The Flanders lace! The fine Dutch holland! How would they vent their scandal over their tea-tables? And where would your beaux have Champagne, to toast their mistresses, were it not for the merchant?

Ob. Pr. Verily, neighbour Tradelove, thou dost waste thy breath about nothing—All that thou hast said tendeth only to debauch youth, and fill their heads with the pride and luxury of this world.—The merchant is a very great friend to Satan, and sendeth as many to his dominions as the pope.

Per. Right: I say knowledge makes the man.

Ob. Pr. Yea, but not thy kind of knowledge——it is the knowledge of truth.——Search thou for the light within, and not for baubles, friend.

Mrs Lov. Ah, study your country's good, Mr Periwinkle, and not her insects.——Rid you of your home-bred monsters, before you fetch any from abroad——I dare swear you have maggots enough in your own brain to stock all the virtuosos in Europe with butterflies.

Sir Phil. By my soul, Miss Nancy's a wit.

Ob. Pr. That is more than she can say by thee, friend.—Look ye, it is in vain to talk: When I meet a man worthy of her, she shall have my leave to marry him.

Mrs Lov. Provided he be of the faithful.——Was there ever such a swarm of caterpillars to blast the hopes of a woman! [*Aside.*] Know this, that you contend in vain:—I'll have no husband of your choosing, nor shall you lord it over me long———I'll try the power of an English senate.——Orphans have been redress'd, and wills set aside—And none did ever deserve their pity more.—Oh, Fainwell! where are thy promises to free me from these vermin?—Alas! the task was more difficult than he imagined!

A harder task than what the poets tell,
Of yore, the fair Andromeda befel:
She but one monster fear'd; I've four to fear,
And see no Perseus, no deliverer near. [*Exit.*

Enter Servant, and whispers to PRIM.

Serv. One Simon Pure enquireth for thee.

Per. The woman is mad. [*Exit.*

Sir Phil. So you are all in my opinion. [*Exit.*

Ob. Pr. Friend Tradelove, business requireth my presence.

Trade. Oh, I sha'n't trouble you—Pox take him for an unmannerly dog—However, I have kept my word with my Dutchman, and will introduce him too, for all you. [*Exit.*

Enter Colonel in a Quaker's habit.

Ob. Pr. Friend Pure, thou art welcome.—How is it with friend Holdfast, and all friends in Bristol? Timothy Littleworth, John Slenderbrain, and Christopher Keepfaith?

Col. A goodly company! [*Aside.*] They are all in health, I thank thee for them.

Ob. Pr. Friend Holdfast writes me word that thou earnest lately from Pennsylvania:—how do all friends there?

Col. What the devil shall I say? I know just as much of Pennsylvania as I do of Bristol. [*Aside.*

Ob. Pr. Do they thrive?

Col. Yea, friend, the blessings of their good works fall upon them.

Enter Mrs PRIM *and Mrs* LOVELY.

Ob. Pr. Sarah, know our friend Pure.

Mrs Pr. Thou art welcome. [*He salutes her.*

Col. Here comes the sum of all my wishes—How charming she appears, even in that disguise! [*Aside.*

Ob. Pr. Why dost thou consider the maiden so attentively, friend?

Col. I will tell thee.——About four days ago I saw a vision—this very maiden, but in vain attire, standing on a precipice; and heard a voice, which called me by my name—and bid me put forth my hand, and save her from the pit——I did so; and methought the damsel grew unto my side.

Mrs Pr. What can that portend?

Ob. Pr. The damsel's conversion—I am persuaded.

Mrs Lov. That's alse, I'm sure. [*Aside.*

Ob. Pr. Wilt thou use the means, friend Pure?

Col. Means! What means?—Is she not thy daughter—already one of the faithful?

Mrs Pr. No, alas! she's one of the ungodly.

Ob. Pr. Pray thee mind what this good man will say unto thee: he will teach thee the way that thou shouldst walk, Anne.

Mrs Lov. I know my way without his instruction: I hop'd to have been quiet when once I had put on your odious formality here.

Col. Then thou wearest it out of compulsion, not choice, friend?

Mrs Lov. Thou art in the right of it, friend.

Mrs Pr. Art thou not asham'd to mimic the good man? Ah! thou art a stubborn girl.

Col. Mind her not: she hurteth not me—If thou wilt leave her alone with me, I will discuss some few points with her, that may perchance soften her stubbornness, and melt her into compliance.

Ob. Pr. Content.—I pray thee put it home to her.—Come, Sarah, let us leave the good man with her.

Mrs Lov. [*Catching hold of* PRIM; *he breaks loose, and exit.*] What do you mean—to leave me with this old enthusiastical canter? Don't think, because I comply'd with your formality, to impose your ridiculous doctrine upon me.

Col. I pray thee, young woman, moderate thy passion.

Mrs Lov. I pray thee walk after thy leader: You will but lose your labour upon me.—These wretches will certainly make me mad!

Col. I am of another opinion:—The spirit telleth me I shall convert thee, Anne.

Mrs Lov. 'Tis a lying spirit: don't believe it.

Col. Say'st thou so? Why, then, thou shalt convert me, my angel. [*Catching her in his arms.*

Mrs Lov. [*Shrieks.*] Ah! monster, hold off, or I'll tear thy eyes out.

Col. Hush! for Heaven's sake—Dost thou not know me? I am Fainwell.

Mrs Lov. Fainwell! [*Enter old* PRIM.] Oh, I'm undone! Prim, here——I wish with all my soul I had been dumb.

Ob. Pr. What is the matter? Why didst thou shriek out, Anne?

Mrs Lov. Shriek out! I'll shriek and shriek again, cry murder, thieves, or any thing, to drown the noise of that eternal babbler, if you leave me with him any longer.

Ob. Pr. Was that all? Fie, fie, Anne.

Col. No matter: I'll bring down her stomach, I'll warrant thee.——Leave us, I pray thee.

Ob. Pr. Fare thee well. [*Exit.*

Col. My charming, lovely woman! [*Embraces her.*

Mrs Lov. What mean'st thou by this disguise, Fainwell?

Col. To set thee free, if thou wilt perform thy promise.

Mrs Lov. Make me mistress of my fortune, and make thy own conditions.

Col. This night shall answer all my wishes.—

See, here I have the consent of *three* of thy guardians already, and doubt not but Prim will make the *fourth*. [PRIM *listening.*

Ob. Pr. I would gladly hear what arguments the good man useth to bend her. [*Aside.*

Mrs Lov. Thy words give me new life, methinks.

Ob. Pr. What do I hear?

Mrs Lov. Thou best of men, Heaven meant to bless me, sure, when I first saw thee.

Ob. Pr. He hath mollified her.——Oh, wonderful conversion!

Col. Ha! Prim listening.—No more, my love: we are observed: seem to be edified, and give 'em hopes that thou wilt turn quaker; and leave the rest to me. [*Aloud.*] I am glad to find that thou art touch'd with what I said unto thee, Anne: another time I will explain the other article unto thee: in the mean while, be thou dutiful to our friend Prim.

Mrs Lov. I shall obey thee in every thing.

Enter OBADIAH PRIM.

Ob. Pr. Oh, what a prodigious change is here!——Thou hast wrought a miracle, friend! Anne, how dost thou like the doctrine he hath preached?

Mrs Lov. So well, that I could talk to him for ever, methinks——I am ashamed of my former folly, and ask your pardon, Mr Prim.

Col. Enough, enough, that thou art sorry: he is no pope, Anne.

Ob. Pr. Verily thou dost rejoice me exceedingly, friend.—Will it please thee to walk into the next room, and refresh thyself.—Come, take the maiden by the hand.

Col. We will follow thee.

Enter Servant.

Serv. There is another Simon Pure enquireth for thee, master.

Col. The devil there is. [*Aside.*

Ob. Pr. Another Simon Pure! I do not know him—Is he any relation of thine?

Col. No, friend; I know him not.——Pox take him! I wish he were in Pennsylvania again, with all my soul. [*Aside.*

Mrs Lov. What shall I do? [*Aside.*

Ob. Pr. Bring him up.

Col. Humph! Then one of us must go down, that's certain—Now impudence assist me.

Enter SIMON PURE.

Ob. Pr. What is thy will with me, friend?

S. Pu. Didst thou not receive a letter from Aminadab Holdfast of Bristol, concerning one Simon Pure?

Ob. Pr. Yea, and Simon Pure is already here, friend.

Col. And Simon Pure will stay here, friend, if it be possible. [*Aside.*

S. Pu. That's an untruth, for I am he.

Col. Take thou heed, friend, what thou dost say:—I do affirm that I am Simon Pure.

S. Pu. Thy name may be Pure, friend, but not that Pure.

Col. Yea, that Pure which my good friend, Aminadab Holdfast, wrote to my friend Prim about; the same Simon Pure that came from Pennsylvania, and sojourned in Bristol eleven days. Thou wouldst not take my name from me, wouldst thou?——till I have done with it. [*Aside.*

S. Pu. Thy name! I'm astonish'd!

Col. At what? At thy own assurance?

[*Going up to him,* S. PURE *starts back.*

S. Pu. Avaunt, Satan; approach me not: I defy thee and all thy works.

Mrs Lov. Oh, he'll outcant him—Undone, undone for ever. [*Aside.*

Col. Hark thee, friend, thy sham will not take——Don't exert thy voice: thou art too well acquainted with Satan to start at him, thou wicked reprobate—What can thy design be here?

Enter a Servant, and gives PRIM *a letter.*

Ob. Pr. One of these must be a counterfeit, but which I cannot say.

Col. What can that letter be? [*Aside.*

S. Pu. Thou must be the devil, friend, that's certain; for no human power can stock so great a falsehood.

Ob. Pr. This letter sayeth that thou art better acquainted with that prince of darkness than any here.—Read that, I pray thee, Simon.

[*Gives it the Col.*

Col. 'Tis Freeman's hand—[*Reads.*] "There is a design formed to rob your house this night, and cut your throat; and for that purpose there is a man disguised like a quaker, who is to pass for one Simon Pure. The gang, whereof I am one, though now resolved to rob no more, has been at Bristol: One of them came in the coach with the quaker, whose name he hath taken, and, from what he hath gathered from him, formed that design; and did not doubt but he should impose so far upon you, as to make you turn out the real Simon Pure, and keep him with you. Make the right use of this. Adieu."—Excellent well! [*Aside.*

Ob. Pr. Dost thou hear this? [*To* S. PURE.

S. Pu. Yea, but it moveth me not: that, doubtless, is the impostor. [*Pointing at the Col.*

Col. Ah! thou wicked one—now I consider thy face, I remember thou didst come up in the leathern conveniency with me:—Thou hadst a black bob wig on, and a brown camblet coat, with brass buttons.—Canst thou deny it? ha?

S. Pu. Yea, I can, and with a safe conscience too, friend.

Ob. Pr. Verily, friend, thou art the most impudent villain I ever saw.

Mrs Lov. Nay, then, I'll have a fling at him. [*Aside.*] I remember the face of this fellow at Bath—Ay, this is he that pick'd my lady Raffle's pocket in the Grove—Don't you remember that the mob pump'd you, friend?—This is the most notorious rogue—

S. Pu. What dost provoke thee to seek my life?—Thou wilt not hang me, wilt thou, wrongfully?

Ob. Pr. She will do thee no hurt, nor thou

shalt do me none; therefore get thee about thy business, friend, and leave thy wicked course of life, or thou may'st not come off so favourably every where.

Col. Go, friend, I would advise thee, and tempt thy fate no more.

S. Pu. Yea, I will go, but it shall be to thy confusion; for I shall clear myself: I will return with some proofs that shall convince thee, Obadiah, that thou art highly imposed upon. [*Exit.*

Col. Then there will be no staying for me, that's certain—What the devil shall I do?

[*Aside.*

Ob. Pr. What monstrous works of iniquity are there in this world, Simon!

Col. Yea, the age is full of vice.—'Sdeath! I am so confounded, I know not what to say.

[*Aside.*

Ob. Pr. Thou art disorder'd, friend—Art thou not well?

Col. My spirit is greatly troubled, and something telleth me, that though I have wrought a good work in converting this maiden, this tender maiden, yet my labour will be in vain; for the evil spirit fighteth against her; and I see, yea, I see with the eye of my inward man, that Satan will re-buffet her again, whenever I withdraw myself from her; and she will, yea, this very damsel will return again to that abomination from whence I have retriev'd her, as if it were, yea, as if it were out of the jaws of the fiend.

Ob. Pr. Good lack, thinkest thou so?

Mrs Lov. I must second him. [*Aside.*] What meaneth this struggling with me? I feel the spirit resisteth the vanities of this world, but the flesh is rebellious, yea, the flesh—I greatly fear the flesh, and the weakness thereof—hum!

Ob. Pr. The maid is inspir'd.

Col. Behold her light begins to shine forth.—Excellent woman! [*Aside.*

Mrs Lov. This good man hath spoken comfort unto me, yea, comfort, I say; because the words which he hath breathed into my outward ears are gone through, and fix'd in mine heart, yea, verily, in mine heart, I say;—and I feel the spirit doth love him exceedingly—hum!

Col. She acts it to the life. [*Aside.*

Ob. Pr. Prodigious! The damsel is filled with the spirit.—Sarah.

Enter Mrs PRIM.

Mrs Pr. I am greatly rejoiced to see such a change in our beloved Anne.—I came to tell thee that supper stayeth for thee.

Col. I am not disposed for thy food; my spirit longeth for more delicious meat!—Fain would I redeem this maiden from the tribe of sinners, and break those cords asunder wherewith she is bound—hum!

Mrs Lov. Something whispers in my ears, methinks—that I must be subject to the will of this good man, and from him only must hope for consolation—hum!—It also telleth me that I am a chosen vessel to raise up seed to the faithful, and that thou must consent that we two be one flesh, according to the word—hum!

Ob. Pr. What a revelation is here? This is certainly part of thy vision, friend; this is the maiden's growing into thy side: Ah! with what willingness should I give thee my consent, could I give thee her fortune too—but thou wilt never get the consent of the wicked ones.

Col. I wish I was sure of yours. [*Aside.*

Ob. Pr. My soul rejoiceth, yea, rejoiceth, I say, to find the spirit within thee; for lo, it moveth thee with natural agitation—yea, with natural agitation towards this good man—yea, it stirreth, as one may say,—yea, verily, I say, it stirreth up thy inclination—yea, as one would stir a pudding.

Mrs Lov. I see, I see the spirit guiding of thy hand, good Obadiah Prim, and now behold thou art signing thy consent;—and now I see myself within thy arms, my friend and brother; yea, I am become bone of thy bone, and flesh of thy flesh—[*Embracing him*]—hum!

Col. Admirably performed. [*Aside.*]—And I will take thee in all spiritual love for an help-mate, yea, for the wife of my bosom;——and now methinks——I feel a longing——yea, a longing, I say, for the consummation of thy love,—yea, I do long exceedingly.

Mrs Lov. And verily, verily, my spirit feeleth the same longing.

Mrs Pr. The spirit hath greatly moved them both.—Friend Prim, thou must consent: there's no resisting of the spirit!

Ob. Pr. Yea, the light within sheweth me that I shall fight a good fight—and wrestle through those reprobate fiends, thy other guardians;——yea, I perceive the spirit will hedge thee into the flock of the righteous.—Thou art a chosen lamb—yea, a chosen lamb, and I will not push thee back—No, I will not, I say:—No, thou shalt leap-a, and frisk-a, and skip-a, and bound, and bound, I say,—yea, bound within the fold of the righteous—yea, even within thy fold, my brother.—Fetch me the pen and ink, Sarah—and my hand shall confess its obedience to the spirit.

Col. I wish it were over.

Enter Mrs PRIM, *with pen and ink.*

Mrs Lov. I tremble lest this quaking rogue should return and spoil all. [*Aside.*

Ob. Pr. Here, friend, do thou write what the spirit prompteth, and I will sign it. [*Col. sits down.*

Mrs Pr. Verily, Anne, it greatly rejoiceth me to see thee reformed from that original wickedness wherein I found thee.

Mrs Lov. I do believe thou art, and I thank thee.

Col. [*Reads.*] "This is to certify all whom it may concern, that I do freely give all my right and title in Anne Lovely to Simon Pure, and my full consent that she shall become his wife, according to the form of marriage. Witness my hand."

Ob. Pr. That's enough:—Give me the pen.
[*Signs it.*

Enter BETTY, *running to Mrs* LOVELY.

Betty. Oh! madam, madam, here's the quaking man again: he has brought a coachman and two or three more.

Mrs Lov. Ruin'd past redemption!
[*Aside to Colonel.*

Col. No, no; one minute sooner had spoil'd all; but now——Here's company coming, friend: give me the paper. [*Going up to* PRIM *hastily.*

Ob. Pr. Here it is, Simon; and I wish thee happy with the maiden.

Mrs Lov. 'Tis done; and now, devil, do thy worst.

Enter SIMON PURE *and Coachman, &c.*

S. Pu. Look thee, friend, I have brought these people to satisfy thee that I am not that impostor which thou didst take me for:—This is the man that did drive the leathern conveniency, and brought me from Bristol—and—this is—

Col. Look ye, friend, to save the court the trouble of examining witnesses—I plead guilty—ha, ha!

Ob. Pr. How's this? Is not thy name Pure, then?

Col. No, really, sir: I only made bold with this gentleman's name——but I here give it up, safe and sound: it has done the business which I had occasion for, and now I intend to wear my own, which shall be at his service upon the same occasion at any time—Ha, ha, ha!

S. Pu. Oh! the wickedness of the age!

Coach. Then you've no further need of us.
[*Exit.*

Col. No, honest man, you may go about your business.

Ob. Pr. I am struck dumb with thy impudence.—Anne, thou hast deceiv'd me—and perchance undone thyself.

Mrs Pr. Thou art a dissembling baggage, and shame will overtake thee. [*Exit.*

S. Pu. I am griev'd to see thy wife so much troubled: I will follow and console her. [*Exit.*

Enter Servant.

Serv. Thy brother guardians enquire for thee: here is another man with them.

Mrs Lov. Who can that other man be?
[*To the Colonel.*

Col. 'Tis one Freeman, a friend of mine, whom I ordered to bring the rest of the guardians here.

Enter Sir PHILIP, TRADELOVE, PERIWINKLE, *and* FREEMAN.

Free. [*To the Col.*] Is all safe? Did my letter do you service?

Col. All, all's safe! ample service. [*Aside.*

Sir Phil. Miss Nancy, how dost do, child?

Mrs Lov. Don't call me miss, friend Philip: my name is Anne, thou knowest.

Sir Phil. What, is the girl metamorphos'd?

Mrs Lov. I wish thou wert so metamorphos'd.—Ah! Philip, throw off that gaudy attire, and wear the clothes becoming thy age.

Ob. Pr. I am asham'd to see these men.
[*Aside.*

Sir Phil. My age! The woman is possess'd!

Col. No, thou art possess'd rather, friend.

Trade. Hark ye, Mrs Lovely, one word with you. [*Takes hold of her hand.*

Col. This maiden is my wife, thanks to friend Prim, and thou hast no business with her.
[*Takes her from him.*

Trade. His wife! Hark ye, Mr Freeman.

Per. Why, you have made a very fine piece of work of it, Mr Prim.

Sir Phil. Married to a quaker! Thou art a fine fellow to be left guardian to an orphan, truly—There's a husband for a young lady!

Col. When I have put on my beau clothes, Sir Philip, you'll like me better.

Sir Phil. Thou wilt make a very scurvy beau—friend.

Col. I believe I can prove it, under your hand, that you thought me a very fine gentleman in the Park t'other day, about thirty-six minutes after eleven.—Will you take a pinch, Sir Philip——One of the finest snuff-boxes you ever saw.
[*Offers him snuff.*

Sir Phil. Ha, ha, ha! I'm overjoyed, faith, I am, if thou be'st the gentleman——I own I did give my consent to the gentleman I brought here to-day;——but whether this is he, I cann't be positive.

Ob. Pr. Canst thou not?—Now, I think thou art a fine fellow to be left guardian to an orphan.—Thou shallow-brain'd shuttlecock, he may be a pick-pocket, for aught thou dost know.

Per. You would have been two rare fellows to have been trusted with the sole management of her fortune, would ye not, think ye? But Mr Tradelove and myself shall take care of her portion.

Trade. Ay, ay, so we will.—Didn't you tell me the Dutch merchant desir'd me to meet him here, Mr Freeman?

Free. I did so; and I'm sure he will be here, if you'll have a little patience.

Col. What, is Mr Tradelove impatient? Nay, then, ik ben gereet voor you, heb be, Jan Van Timtamtirelireletta Heer Van Fainwell, vergeeten!

Trade. Oh! pox of the name!—What, have you trick'd me too, Mr Freeman?

Col. Trick'd, Mr Tradelove! Did not I give you two thousand pounds for your consent fairly? And now do you tell a gentleman he has trick'd you?

Per. So, so, you are a pretty guardian, faith, to sell your charge. What, did you look upon her as part of your stock?

Ob. Pr. Ha! ha, ha, ha! I am glad thy knavery is found out, however——I confess the maiden over-reached me, and I had no sinister end at all.

Per. Ay, ay, one thing or other over-reached you all—but I'll take care he shall never finger a penny of her money, I warrant you.—Over-reached, quoth-a! Why, I might have been over-reached too, if I had had no more wit. I don't know but this very fellow may be him that was directed to me from Grand Cairo t'other day.—Ha, ha, ha!

Col. The very same.

Per. Are you so, sir? But your trick would not pass upon me.

Col. No, as you say, at that time it did not: that was not my lucky hour:——But hark ye, sir, I must let you into one secret——You may keep honest John Tradescant's coat on, for your uncle Sir Toby Periwinkle is not dead—so the charge of mourning will be saved; ha, ha, ha!—Don't you remember Mr Pillage, your uncle's steward? Ha, ha, ha!

Per. Not dead?—I begin to fear I am trick'd too.

Col. Don't you remember the signing of a lease, Mr Periwinkle?

Per. Well, and what signifies that lease, if my uncle is not dead?——Ha! I am sure it was a lease I signed.

Col. Ay, but it was a lease for life, sir, and of this beautiful tenement, I thank you.

[*Taking hold of Mrs* LOVELY.

Omnes. Ha, ha, ha! Neighbours fare.

Free. So then I find you are all trick'd; ha, ha!

Per. I am certain I read as plain a lease as ever I read in my life.

Col. You read a lease, I grant you, but you sign'd this contract. [*Shewing a paper.*

Per. How durst you put this trick upon me, Mr Freeman? Did'nt you tell me my uncle was dying?

Free. And would tell you twice as much to serve my friend; ha, ha!

Sir Phil. What, the learned and famous Mr Periwinkle chous'd too!——Ha, ha, ha!—I shall die with laughing; ha, ha, ha!

Ob. Pr. It had been well if her father had left her to wiser heads than *thine* and *mine*, friends; ha, ha, ha!

Trade. Well, since you have outwitted us all, pray you, what and who are you, sir?

Sir Phil. Sir, the gentleman is a fine gentleman.——I am glad you have got a person, madam, who understands dress and good breeding ———I was resolved she should have a husband of my choosing.

Ob. Pr. I am sorry the maiden has fallen into such hands.

Trade. A beau! Nay, then she is finely help'd up.

Mrs Lov. Why, beaux are great encouragers of trade, sir; ha, ha, ha!

Col. Look ye, gentlemen—I am the person who can give the best account of myself; and I must beg Sir Philip's pardon, when I tell him, that I have as much aversion to what he calls dress and breeding, as I have to the enemies of my religion. I have had the honour to serve his majesty, and headed a regiment of the bravest fellows that ever push'd bayonet in the throat of a Frenchman; and notwithstanding the fortune this lady brings me, whenever my country wants my aid, this sword and arm are at her service.

Therefore, my dear, if thou'lt but deign to smile,
I meet a recompence for all my toil.
Love and religion ne'er admit restraint,
And force makes many sinners, not one saint.
Still free as air the active mind does rove,
And searches proper objects for its love;
But that once fix'd, 'tis past the pow'r of art
To chace the dear idea from the heart:
'Tis liberty of choice that sweetens life,
Makes the glad husband, and the happy wife.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY MR SEWELL.

WHAT new strange ways our modern beaus devise!
What trials of love-skill to gain the prize!
The heathen gods, who never matter'd rapes,
Scarce wore such strange variety of shapes.
The devil take their odious barren skulls,
To court in form of snakes and filthy bulls.
Old Jove once nick'd it too, as I am told,
In a whole lap-full of true standard gold:
How must his godship then fair Danaë warm!
In trucking ware for ware there is no harm.
Well, after all, that money has a charm.
But now, indeed, that stale invention's past;
Besides, you know that guineas fall so fast,
Poor nymph must come to pocket-piece at last.
Old Harry's face, or good Queen Bess's ruff—
Not that I'd take 'em—may do well enough:

No——my ambitious spirit's far above
Those little tricks of mercenary love.
That man be mine, who, like the colonel here,
Can top his character in ev'ry sphere:
Who can a thousand ways employ his wit;
Out-promise statesmen, and out-cheat a cit;
Beyond the colours of a trav'ller paint,
And cant, and ogle too—beyond a saint.
The last disguise most pleas'd me, I confess:
There's something tempting in the preaching dress;
And pleas'd me more than once a dame of note,
Who lov'd her husband in his footman's coat;—
To see one eye in wanton motions play'd,
The other to the heav'nly regions stray'd,
As if for its fellow's frailties it pray'd.
But yet I hope, for all that I have said,
To find my spouse a man of war in bed.

THE

DRUMMER;

OR,

THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

BY

ADDISON.

PROLOGUE.

In this grave age, when comedies are few,
We crave your patronage for one that's new;
Though 'twere poor stuff, yet bid the author fair,
And let the scarceness recommend the ware.
Long have your ears been fill'd with tragic parts;
Blood and blank-verse have harden'd all your hearts;
If e'er you smile, 'tis at some party strokes,—
Round-heads and woode-shoes are standing jokes:
The same conceit gives claps and hisses birth,
You're grown such politicians in your mirth!
For once we try (though 'tis, I own, unsafe)
To please you all, and make both parties laugh.
Our author, anxious for his fame to-night,
And bashful in his first attempts to write,
Lies cautiously obscure and unreveal'd,
Like ancient actors, in a mask conceal'd.
Censure, when no man knows who writes the play,
Were much good malice merely thrown away.
The mighty critics will not blast, for shame,
A raw young thing, who dares not tell his name:
Good-natur'd judges will th' unknown defend,
And fear to blame, lest they should hurt a friend:
Each wit may praise it for his own dear sake,
And hint he writ it, if the thing should take:—
But if you're rough, and use him like a dog,
Depend upon it——he'll remain incog.
If you should hiss, he swears he'll hiss as high,
And, like a culprit, raise the hue and cry..
If cruel men are still averse to spare
These scenes, they fly for refuge to the fair.
Though with a ghost our comedy be heighten'd,
Ladies, upon my word, you sha'n't be frighten'd:
Oh, 'tis a ghost that scorns to be uncivil,
A well-spread, lusty, jointure-hunting devil:
An am'rous ghost, that's faithful, fond, and true,
Made up of flesh and blood—as much as you.
Then, ev'ry evening, come in flocks, undaunted;
We never think this house is too much haunted.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Sir GEORGE TRUMAN.
TINSEL.
FANTOME, *the Drummer.*
VELLUM, *Sir George Truman's Steward.*
Butler.
Coachman.
Gardener.

WOMEN.

Lady TRUMAN.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A great Hall.*

Enter the Butler, Coachman, and Gardener.

But. There came another coach to town last night, that brought a gentleman to enquire about this strange noise we hear in the house. This spirit will bring a power of custom to the George.——If so be he continues his pranks, I design to sell a pot of ale, and set up the sign of the drum.

Coach. I'll give madam warning, that's flat—I've always lived in sober families—I'll not disparage myself to be a servant in a house that is haunted.

Gard. I'll e'en marry Nell, and rent a bit of ground of my own, if both of you leave madam; not but that madam's a very good woman, if Mrs Abigail did not spoil her.——Come, here's her health.

But. 'Tis a very hard thing to be a butler in a house that is disturbed. He made such a racket in the cellar last night, that I'm afraid he'll sour all the beer in my barrels.

Coach. Why then, John, we ought to take it off as fast as we can—Here's to you—He rattled so loud under the tiles last night, that I verily thought the house would have fallen over our heads. I durst not go up into the cock-loft this morning, if I had not got one of the maids to go along with me.

Gard. I thought I heard him in one of my bed-posts. I marvel, John, how he gets into the house, when all the gates are shut.

But. Why, look ye, Peter, your spirit will creep you into an augre-hole——he'll whisk ye through a key-hole, without so much as jostling against one of the wards.

Coach. Poor madam is mainly frighted, that's certain, and verily believes it is my master, that was killed in the last campaign.

But. Out of all manner of question, Robin, 'tis Sir George. Mrs Abigail is of opinion it can be none but his honour. He always loved the wars, and, you know, was mightily pleased, from a child, with the music of a drum.

Gard. I wonder his body was never found after the battle.

But. Found! Why, ye fool, is not his body here about the house? Dost thou think he can beat his drum without hands and arms?

Coach. 'Tis master, as sure as I stand here alive; and I verily believe I saw him last night in the town-close.

Gard. Ay! How did he appear?

Coach. Like a white horse.

But. Phoo, Robin! I tell ye, he has never appeared yet, but in the shape of the sound of a drum.

Coach. This makes one almost afraid of one's own shadow.—As I was walking from the stable t'other night, without my lanthorn, I fell across a beam that lay in my way, and faith my heart was in my mouth. I thought I had stumbled over a spirit.

But. Thou might'st as well have stumbled over a straw. Why, a spirit is such a little thing, that I have heard a man, who was a great scholar, say, that he'll dance you a Lancashire hornpipe upon the point of a needle. As I sat in the pantry last night, counting my spoons, the candle, methought, burnt blue, and the spay'd bitch looked as if she saw something.

Coach. Ay, poor cur, she's almost frightened out of her wits.

Gard. Ay, I warrant ye she hears him, many a time and often, when we don't.

But. My lady must have him laid, that's certain, whatever it cost her.

Gard. I fancy, when one goes to market, one might hear of somebody that can make a spell.

Coach. Why, may not the parson of our parish lay him?

But. No, no, no; our parson cannot lay him.

Coach. Why not he, as well as another man?

But. Why, ye fool, he is not qualified. He has not taken the oaths.

Gard. Why, d'ye think, John, that the spirit would take the law of him? Faith, I could tell you one way to drive him off.

Coach. How's that?

Gard. I'll tell you immediately.—[*Drinks*]—I fancy Mrs Abigail might scold him out of the house.

Coach. Ay, she has a tongue that would drown his drum, if any thing could.

But. Pugh! this is all froth: you understand nothing of the matter. The next time it makes a noise, I tell you what ought to be done——I would have the steward speak Latin to it.

Coach. Ay, that would do, if the steward had but courage.

Gard. There you have it. He's a fearful man. If I had as much learning as he, and I met the ghost, I'd tell him his own. But, a-lack! what can one of us poor men do with a spirit, that can neither write nor read!

But. Thou art always cracking and boasting, Peter: thou dost not know what mischief it might do thee, if such a silly dog as thee should offer to speak to it. For aught I know, he might flea thee alive, and make parchment of thy skin, to cover his drum with.

Gard. A fiddlestick!—Tell not me——I fear nothing, not I: I never did harm in my life; I never committed murder.

But. I verily believe thee. Keep thy temper,

Peter. After supper we'll drink each of us a double mug, and then let come what will.

Gard. Why, that's well said, John—An honest man, that is not quite sober, has nothing to fear—Here's to ye——Why, now if he should come this minute, here would I stand——Ha! what noise is that?

But. Coach. Hà! where?

Gard. The devil! the devil! Oh, no; 'tis Mrs Abigail.

But. Ay, faith, 'tis she; 'tis Mrs Abigail! A good mistake.—'Tis Mrs Abigail.

Enter ABIGAIL.

Ab. Here are your drunken sots for you! Is this a time to be guzzling, when gentry are come to the house! Why don't you lay your cloth? How come you out of the stables? Why are you not at work in your garden?

Gard. Why, yonder's the fine Londoner and madam fetching a walk together, and, methought, they looked as if they should say they had rather have my room than my company.

But. And so, forsooth, being all three met together, we are doing our endeavours to drink this same drummer out of our heads.

Gard. For you must know, Mrs Abigail, we are all of opinion that one cann't be a match for him, unless one be as drunk as a drum.

Coach. I am resolved to give madam warning to hire herself another coachman; for I came to serve my master, d'ye see, while he was alive, but do suppose that he has no further occasion for a coach, now he walks.

But. Truly, Mrs Abigail, I must needs say that this same spirit is a very odd sort of a body, after all, to fright madam and his old servants at this rate.

Gard. And, truly, Mrs Abigail, I must needs say, I served my master contentedly while he was living, but I will serve no man living (that is, no man that is not living) without double wages.

Ab. Ay, 'tis such cowards as you that go about with idle stories, to disgrace the house, and bring so many strangers about it: You first frighten yourselves, and then your neighbours.

Gard. Frightened! I scorn your words.—Frightened, quoth-a!

Ab. What, you sot, are you growing pot-valiant?

Gard. Frightened with a drum! that's a good one! It will do us no harm, I'll answer for it: it will bring no blood-shed along with it, take my word. It sounds as like a train-band drum as ever I heard in my life.

But. Pr'ythee, Peter, don't be so presumptuous.

Ab. Well, these drunken rogues take it as I could wish. [*Aside.*

Gard. I scorn to be frightened, now I am in for't: If old dub-a-dub should come into the room, I would take him———

But. Pr'ythee hold thy tongue.

Gard. I would take him——

[*The drum beats: the Gardener endeavours to get off, and falls.*

But. Coach. Speak to it, Mrs Abigail!

Gard. Spare my life, and take all I have!

Coach. Make off, make off, good butler, and let us go hide ourselves in the cellar.

[*They all run off.*

Ab. So, now the coast is clear, I may venture to call out my drummer—But first let me shut the door, lest we be surprised.—Mr Fantome! Mr Fantome! [*He beats.*] Nay, nay, pray come out: the enemy's fled—I must speak with you immediately——Don't stay to beat a parley.

[*The back scene opens, and discovers* FANTOME *with a drum.*

Fan. Dear Mrs Nabby, I have overheard all that has been said, and find thou hast managed this thing so well, that I could take thee in my arms and kiss thee—if my drum did not stand in the way.

Ab. Well, o' my conscience, you are the merriest ghost! and the very picture of Sir George Truman.

Fan. There you flatter me, Mrs Abigail: Sir George had that freshness in his looks, that we men of the town cannot come up to.

Ab. Oh, death may have altered you, you know—Besides, you must consider you lost a great deal of blood in the battle.

Fan. Ay, that's right: let me look never so pale, this cut cross my forehead will keep me in countenance.

Ab. 'Tis just such a one as my master received from a cursed French trooper, as my lady's letter informed her.

Fan. It happens luckily that this suit of clothes of Sir George's fits me so well—I think I cann't fail hitting the air of a man with whom I was so long acquainted.

Ab. You are the very man——I vow I almost start when I look upon you.

Fan. But what good will this do me, if I must remain invisible?

Ab. Pray, what good did your being visible do you? The fair Mr Fantome thought no woman could withstand him—But when you were seen by my lady in her proper person, after she had taken a full survey of you, and heard all the pretty things you could say, she very civilly dismiss'd you, for the sake of this empty, noisy creature, Tinsel. She fancies you have been gone from hence this fortnight.

Fan. Why, really, I love thy lady so well, that though I had no hopes of gaining her for myself, I could not bear to see her given to another, especially such a wretch as Tinsel.

Ab. Well, tell me truly, Mr Fantome, have not you a great opinion of my fidelity to my dear lady, that I would not suffer her to be deluded in this manner for less than a thousand pounds?

Fan. Thou art always reminding me of my promise—Thou shalt have it, if thou canst bring our project to bear: Dost not know that stories

of ghosts and apparitions generally end in a pot of money.

Ab. Why, truly, now, Mr Fantome, I should think myself a very bad woman, if I had done what I do for a farthing less.

Fan. Dear Abigail, how I admire thy virtue!

Ab. No, no, Mr Fantome, I defy the worst of my enemies to say I love mischief for mischief's sake.

Fan. But is thy lady persuaded that I'm the ghost of her deceased husband?

Ab. I endeavour to make her believe so, and tell her, every time your drum rattles, that her husband is chiding her for entertaining this new lover.

Fan. Pr'ythee make use of all thy art; for I'm tired to death with strolling round this wide old house, like a rat behind the wainscot.

Ab. Did not I tell you 'twas the purest place in the world for you to play your tricks in? There's none of the family that knows every hole and corner in it, besides myself.

Fan. Ah, Mrs Abigail! you have had your intrigues.

Ab. For you must know, when I was a romping young girl, I was a mighty lover of hide and seek.

Fan. I believe by this time I am as well acquainted with the house as yourself.

Ab. You are very much mistaken, Mr Fantome: but no matter for that: Here is to be your station to-night. This place is unknown to any one living besides myself, since the death of the joiner, who, you must understand, being a lover of mine, contrived the wainscot to move to and fro, in the manner that you find it. I designed it for a wardrobe for my lady's cast clothes. Oh, the stomachers, stays, petticoats, commodes, laced shoes, and good things that I have had in it!—Pray take care you don't break the cherry brandy bottle that stands up in the corner.

Fan. Well, Mrs Abigail, I hire your closet of you but for this one night—A thousand pounds, you know, is a very good rent.

Ab. Well, get you gone: you have such a way with you, there's no denying you any thing.

Fan. I am thinking how Tinsel will stare, when he sees me come out of the wall; for I am resolved to make my appearance to-night.

Ab. Get you in, get you in; my lady's at the door.

Fan. Pray take care she does not keep me up so late as she did last night, or depend upon it I'll beat the tattoo.

Ab. I'm undone, I'm undone!—[*As he is going in.*] Mr Fantome! Mr Fantome! have you put the thousand pound bond into my brother's hand?

Fan. Thou shalt have it; I tell thee, thou shalt have it. [FAN. *goes in.*

Ab. No more words——Vanish, vanish!

Enter Lady TRUMAN.

Ab. [*Opening the door.*] Oh, dear madam, was it you that made such a knocking? My heart does so beat—I vow you have frighted me to death—I thought verily it had been the drummer.

L. Tru. I have been shewing the garden to Mr Tinsel: he's most insufferably witty upon us about this story of the drum.

Ab. Indeed, madam, he's a very loose man: I'm afraid 'tis he that hinders my poor master from resting in his grave.

L. Tru. Well, an infidel is such a novelty in the country, that I am resolved to divert myself a day or two at least with the oddness of his conversation.

Ab. Ah, madam, the drum began to beat in the house as soon as ever that creature was admitted to visit you. All the while Mr Fantome made his addresses to you, there was not a mouse stirring in the family, more than used to be.

L. Tru. This baggage has some design upon me, more than I can yet discover. [*Aside.*]—Mr Fantome was always thy favourite.

Ab. Ay, and should have been yours too, by my consent. Mr Fantome was not such a slight fantastic thing as this is—Mr Fantome was the best built man one should see in a summer's day! Mr Fantome was a man of honour, and loved you. Poor soul, how has he sighed, when he has talked to me of my hard-hearted lady.—Well, I had as lief as a thousand pounds you would marry Mr Fantome.

L. Tru. To tell thee truly, I loved him well enough till I found he loved me so much. But Mr Tinsel makes his court to me with so much neglect and indifference, and with such an agreeable sauciness—Not that I say I'll marry him.

Ab. Marry him, quoth-a! No—If you should, you'll be awakened sooner than married couples generally are—you'll quickly have a drum at your window.

L. Tru. I'll hide my contempt of Tinsel for once, if it be but to see what this wench drives at. [*Aside.*

Ab. Why, suppose your husband, after this fair warning he has given you, should sound you an alarm at midnight, then open your curtains, with a face as pale as my apron, and cry out, with a hollow voice, What dost thou do in bed with this spindle-shanked fellow?

L. Tru. Why wilt thou needs have it to be my husband? He never had any reason to be offended at me. I always loved him while he was living, and should prefer him to any man, were he so still. Mr Tinsel is indeed very idle in his talk; but I fancy, Abigail, a discreet woman might reform him.

Ab. That's a likely matter indeed! Did you ever hear of a woman who had power over a man when she was his wife, that had none while she was his mistress? Oh, there's nothing in the world improves a man in his complaisance like marriage!

L. Tru. He is, indeed, at present, too familiar in his conversation.

Ab. Familiar, madam! in troth, he's downright rude.

L. Tru. But that, you know, Abigail, shews he has no dissimulation in him——Then he is apt to jest a little too much upon grave subjects.

Ab. Grave subjects! He jests upon the church.

L. Tru. But that, you know, Abigail, may be only to shew his wit——Then it must be owned he's extremely talkative.

Ab. Talkative, d'ye call it! he's downright impertinent.

L. Tru. But that, you know, Abigail, is a sign he has been used to good company——Then, indeed, he is very positive.

Ab. Positive! why, he contradicts you in every thing you say.

L. Tru. But then, you know, Abigail, he has been educated at the inns of court.

Ab. A blessed education indeed! It has made him forget his catechism.

L. Tru. You talk as if you hated him.

Ab. You talk as if you loved him.

L. Tru. Hold your tongue; here he comes.

Enter TINSEL.

Tin. My dear widow!

Ab. My dear widow! marry come up! [*Aside.*

L. Tru. Let him alone, Abigail; so long as he does not call me my dear wife, there's no harm done.

Tin. I have been most ridiculously diverted since I left you—Your servants have made a convert of my booby: his head is so filled with this foolish story of a drummer, that I expect the rogue will be afraid hereafter to go upon a message by moon-light.

L. Tru. Ay, Mr Tinsel, what a loss of billet-doux would that be to many a fine lady!

Ab. Then you still believe this to be a foolish story? I thought my lady had told you that she had heard it herself.

Tin. Ha, ha, ha!

Ab. Why, you would not persuade us out of our senses?

Tin. Ha, ha, ha!

Ab. There's manners for you, madam. [*Aside.*

L. Tru. Admirably rally'd! That laugh was unanswerable! Now I'll be hanged if you could forbear being witty upon me, if I should tell you I heard it no longer ago than last night.

Tin. Fancy!

L. Tru. But what if I should tell you my maid was with me?

Tin. Vapours, vapours! Pray, my dear widow, will you answer me one question?—Had you ever this noise of a drum in your head all the while your husband was living?

L. Tru. And pray, Mr Tinsel, will you let me ask you another question?—Do you think we can hear in the country as well as you do in town?

Tin. Believe me, madam, I could prescribe you a cure for these imaginations.

Ab. Don't tell my lady of imaginations, sir: I have heard it myself.

Tin. Hark thee, child——Art thou not an old maid?

Ab. Sir, if I am, it is my own fault.

Tin. Whims! freaks! megrims! indeed, Mrs Abigail.

Ab. Marry, sir, by your talk, one would believe you thought every thing that was good is a megrim.

L. Tru. Why, truly, I don't very well understand what you meant by your doctrine to me in the garden just now, that every thing we saw was made by chance.

Ab. A very pretty subject indeed for a lover to divert his mistress with.

L. Tru. But I suppose that was only a taste of the conversation you would entertain me with after marriage.

Tin. Oh, I shall then have time to read you such lectures of motions, atoms, and nature—that you shall learn to think as freely as the best of us, and be convinced, in less than a month, that all about us is chance work.

L. Tru. You are a very complaisant person indeed; and so you would make your court to me by persuading me that I was made by chance!

Tin. Ha, ha, ha! well said, my dear! Why, faith, thou wert a very lucky hit, that's certain.

L. Tru. Pray, Mr Tinsel, where did you learn this odd way of talking?

Tin. Ah, widow, 'tis your country innocence makes you think it an odd way of talking.

L. Tru. Though you give no credit to stories of apparitions, I hope you believe there are such things as spirits.

Tin. Simplicity!

Ab. I fancy you don't believe women have souls; d'ye, sir?

Tin. Foolish enough!

L. Tru. I vow, Mr Tinsel, I'm afraid malicious people will say I'm in love with an atheist.

Tin. Oh, my dear, that's an old-fashioned word ——I'm a free-thinker, child.

Ab. I'm sure you are a free speaker!

L. Tru. Really, Mr Tinsel, considering that you are so fine a gentleman, I'm amazed where you got all this learning! I wonder it has not spoiled your breeding.

Tin. To tell you the truth, I have not time to look into these dry matters myself, but I am convinced, by four or five learned men, whom I sometimes overhear at a coffee-house I frequent, that our forefathers were a pack of asses; that the world has been in error for some thousands of years; and that all the people upon earth, excepting those two or three worthy gentlemen, are imposed upon, cheated, bubbled, abused, bamboozled.

Ab. Madam, how can you hear such a profligate? He talks like the London prodigal.

L. Tru. Why, really, I'm thinking, if there be no such things as spirits, a woman has no occasion for marrying—She need not be afraid to lie by herself.

Tin. Ah, my dear! are husbands good for nothing but to frighten away spirits? Dost thou think I could not instruct thee in several other comforts of matrimony?

L. Tru. Ah, but you are a man of so much knowledge, that you would always be laughing at my ignorance—You learned men are so apt to despise one.

Tin. No, child! I'll teach thee my principles—thou shouldst be as wise as I am in a week's time.

L. Tru. Do you think your principles would make a woman the better wife?

Tin. Pr'ythee, widow, don't be queer.

L. Tru. I love a gay temper, but I would not have you rally things that are serious.

Tin. Well enough, faith!—Where's the jest of rallying any thing else?

Ab. Ah, madam, did you ever hear Mr Fantome talk at this rate? [*Aside.*

Tin. But where's this ghost; this son of a whore of a drummer? I'd fain hear him, methinks.

Ab. Pray, madam, don't suffer him to give the ghost such ill language, especially when you have reason to believe it is my master.

Tin. That's well enough, faith, Nab.——Dost think thy master so unreasonable as to continue his claim to his relict after his bones are laid? Pray, widow, remember the words of your contract: you have fulfilled them to a tittle——Did not you marry Sir George to the tune of *till Death us do part?*

L. Tru. I must not hear Sir George's memory treated in so slight a manner.—This fellow must have been at some pains to make himself such a finished coxcomb. [*Aside.*

Tin. Give me but possession of your person, and I'll whirl you up to town for a winter, and cure you at once. Oh, I have known many a country lady come to London with frightful stories of the hall-house being haunted; of fairies, spirits, and witches, that, by the time she had seen a comedy, played at an assembly, and ambled in a ball or two, has been so little afraid of bug-bears, that she has ventured home in a chair at all hours of the night.

Ab. Hum!—Sauce-box! [*Aside.*

Tin. 'Tis the solitude of the country that creates these whimsies: there was never such a thing as a ghost heard of at London, except in the play-house.——Oh, we'd pass all our time in London. 'Tis the scene of pleasure and diversions, where there's something to amuse you every hour of the day. Life's not life in the country.

L. Tru. Well, then, you have an opportunity of shewing the sincerity of that love to me which you profess. You may give a proof that you have an affection to my person, not my jointure.

Tin. Your jointure! How can you think me such a dog? But, child, won't your jointure be the same thing in London as in the country?

L. Tru. No, you're deceived! You must know it is settled on me by marriage-articles, on condition that I live in this old mansion-house, and keep it up in repair.

Tin. How!

Ab. That's well put, madam.

Tin. Why, faith, I have been looking upon this house, and think it is the prettiest habitation I ever saw in my life.

L. Tru. Ay, but then this cruel drum!

Tin. Something so venerable in it!

L. Tru. Ay, but the drum!

Tin. For my part, I like this Gothic way of building better than any of your new orders—it would be a thousand pities it should fall to ruin.

L. Tru. Ay, but the drum!

Tin. How pleasantly we two could pass our time in this delicious situation! Our lives would be a continued dream of happiness. Come, faith, widow, let's go upon the leads, and take a view of the country.

L. Tru. Ay, but the drum! the drum!

Tin. My dear, take my word for it, 'tis all fancy: besides, should he drum in thy very bed-chamber, I should only hug thee the closer.

Clasp'd in the folds of love, I'd meet my doom,
And act my joys, though thunder shook the room. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Opens, and discovers* VELLUM *in his Office, and a Letter in his Hand.*

Vel. This letter astonisheth:—May I believe my own eyes—or rather my spectacles——'To Humphrey Vellum, esquire, steward to the lady Truman.'

'VELLUM,

'I doubt not but you will be glad to hear your master is alive, and designs to be with you in half an hour. The report of my being slain in the Netherlands has, I find, produced some disorders in my family. I am now at the George Inn. If an old man with a grey beard, in a black cloak, enquires after you, give him admittance. He passes for a conjuror, but is really

'Your faithful friend,

'G. TRUMAN.

'P. S. Let this be a secret, and you shall find your account in it.'

This amazeth me! and yet the reasons why I should believe he is still living are manifold.—First, because this has often been the case of other military adventurers.—Secondly, because this news of his death was first published in Dyer's Letter.——Thirdly, because this letter can be written by none but himself—I know his hand and manner of spelling.——Fourthly———

Enter Butler.

But. Sir, here's a strange old gentleman that asks for you: he says he's a conjuror, but he looks very suspicious: I wish he ben't a jesuit.

Vel. Admit him immediately.

But. I wish he ben't a jesuit; but he says he's nothing but a conjuror.

Vel. He says right—he is no more than a conjuror. Bring him in, and withdraw. [*Exit Butler.*] —And fourthly, as I was saying, because—

Enter Butler, with Sir GEORGE.

But. Sir, here is the conjuror—What a devilish long beard he has! I warrant it has been growing these hundred years. [*Aside.*] [*Exit.*

Sir Geo. Dear Vellum, you have received my letter; but before we proceed, lock the door.

Vel It is his voice. [*Shuts the door.*

Sir Geo. In the next place, help me off with this cumbersome cloak.

Vel. It is his shape.

Sir Geo. So:—Now lay my beard upon the table.

Vel. [*After having looked on Sir* GEO. *through his spectacles.*] It is his face, every lineament!

Sir Geo. Well, now I have put off the conjuror and the old man, I can talk to thee more at my ease.

Vel. Believe me, my good master, I am as much rejoiced to see you alive, as I was upon the day you were born. Your name was in all the newspapers in the list of those that were slain.

Sir Geo. We have not time to be particular. I shall only tell thee, in general, that I was taken prisoner in the battle, and was under close confinement several months. Upon my release, I was resolved to surprise my wife with the news of my being alive. I know, Vellum, you are a person of so much penetration, that I need not use any further arguments to convince you that I am so.

Vel. I am—and moreover, I question not but your good lady will likewise be convinced of it. Her honour is a discerning lady.

Sir Geo. I am only afraid she should be convinced of it to her sorrow. Is she not pleased with her imaginary widowhood? Tell me truly: —was she afflicted at the report of my death?

Vel. Sorely.

Sir Geo. How long did her grief last?

Vel. Longer than I have known any widow's —at least three days.

Sir Geo. Three days, say'st thou? Three whole days! I'm afraid thou flatterest me.—Oh, woman, woman!

Vel. Grief is twofold.

Sir Geo. This blockhead is as methodical as ever—but I know he is honest. [*Aside.*

Vel. There is a real grief, and there is a methodical grief.—She was drowned in tears till such time as the tailor had made her widow's weeds—Indeed they became her.

Sir Geo. Became her! and was that her comfort? Truly, a most seasonable consolation.

Vel. I must needs say she paid a due regard to your memory, and could not forbear weeping when she saw company.

Sir Geo. That was kind, indeed! I find she grieved with a great deal of good breeding.—But how comes this gang of lovers about her?

Vel. Her jointure is considerable.

Sir Geo. How this fool torments me! [*Aside.*

Vel. Her person is amiable.

Sir Geo. Death! [*Aside.*

Vel. But her character is unblemished. She has been as virtuous in your absence as a Penelope.

Sir Geo. And has had as many suitors.

Vel. Several have made their overtures.

Sir Geo. Several!

Vel. But she has rejected all.

Sir Geo. There thou revivest me.—But what means this Tinsel? Are his visits acceptable?

Vel. He is young.

Sir Geo. Does she listen to him?

Vel. He is gay.

Sir Geo. Sure she could never entertain a thought of marrying such a coxcomb!

Vel. He is not ill made.

Sir Geo. Are the vows and protestations that passed between us come to this? I cann't bear the thought of it! Is Tinsel the man designed for my worthy successor?

Vel. You do not consider that you have been dead these fourteen months.

Sir Geo. Was there ever such a dog! [*Aside.*

Vel. And I have often heard her say, that she must never expect to find a second Sir George Truman—meaning your ho—nour.

Sir Geo. I think she loved me! But I must search into this story of the drummer, before I discover myself to her. I have put on this habit of a conjuror, in order to introduce myself. It must be your business to recommend me as a most profound person, that, by my great knowledge in the curious arts, can silence the drummer, and dispossess the house.

Vel. I am going to lay my accounts before my lady, and I will endeavour to prevail upon her ho—nour to admit the trial of your art.

Sir Geo. I have scarce heard of any of these stories, that did not arise from a love intrigue. Amours raise as many ghosts as murders.

Vel. Mrs Abigail endeavours to persuade us that 'tis your ho—nour who troubles the house.

Sir Geo. That convinces me 'tis a cheat; for I think, Vellum, I may be pretty well assured it is not me.

Vel. I am apt to think so, truly; ha, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. Abigail had always an ascendant over her lady; and if there is a trick in this matter, depend upon it, she is at the bottom of it. I'll be hanged if this ghost is not one of Abigail's familiars.

Vel. Mrs Abigail has of late been very mysterious.

Sir Geo. I fancy, Vellum, thou couldst worm it out of her. I know formerly there was an amour between you.

Vel. Mrs Abigail hath her allurements; and she

knows I have picked up a competency in your ho—nour's service.

Sir Geo. If thou hast, all I ask of thee, in return, is, that thou wouldst immediately renew thy addresses to her. Coax her up. Thou hast such a silver tongue, Vellum, as 'twill be impossible for her to withstand. Besides, she is so very a woman, that she'll like you the better for giving her the pleasure of telling a secret. In short, wheedle her out of it, and I shall act by the advice which thou givest me.

Vel. Mrs Abigail was never deaf to me, when I talked upon that subject. I will take an opportunity of addressing myself to her in the most pathetic manner.

Sir Geo. In the mean time, lock me up in your office, and bring me word what success you have. —Well, sure I am the first that ever was employed to lay himself.

Vel. You act, indeed, a threefold part in this house: you are a ghost, a conjuror, and my ho—noured master, Sir George Truman; he, he, he! You will pardon me for being jocular.

Sir Geo. Oh, Mr Vellum, with all my heart! You know I love you men of wit and humour. Be as merry as thou pleasest, so thou dost thy business. [*Mimicking him.*] You will remember, Vellum, your commission is twofold: first, to gain admission for me to your lady, and secondly, to get the secret out of Abigail.

Vel. It sufficeth. [*The scene shuts.*

Enter Lady TRUMAN.

L. Tru. Women who have been happy in a first marriage are the most apt to venture upon a second. But, for my part, I had a husband so every way suited to my inclinations, that I must entirely forget him, before I can like another man. I have now been a widow but fourteen months, and have had twice as many lovers, all of them professed admirers of my person, but passionately in love with my jointure. I think it is a revenge I owe my sex, to make an example of this worthless tribe of fellows, who grow impudent, dress themselves fine, and fancy we are obliged to provide for them. But of all my captives, Mr Tinsel is the most extraordinary in his kind. I hope the diversion I give myself with him is unblameable. I'm sure 'tis necessary to turn my thoughts off from the memory of that dear man, who has been the greatest happiness and affliction of my life. My heart would be a prey to melancholy, if I did not find these innocent methods of relieving it. But here comes Abigail: I must tease the baggage; for I find she has taken it into her head that I'm entirely at her disposal.

Enter ABIGAIL.

Ab. Madam, madam, yonder's Mr Tinsel has as good as taken possession of your house. Marry, he says, he must have Sir George's apartment enlarged; for truly, says he, I hate to be straitened. Nay, he was so impudent as to shew me the chamber where he intends to consummate, as he calls it.

L. Tru. Well, he's a wild fellow.

Ab. Indeed he's a very sad man, madam.

L. Tru. He's young, Abigail: 'tis a thousand pities he should be lost: I should be mighty glad to reform him.

Ab. Reform him! Marry, hang him.

L. Tru. Has he not a great deal of life?

Ab. Ay, enough to make your heart ache.

L. Tru. I dare say thou think'st him a very agreeable fellow.

Ab. He thinks himself so, I'll answer for him.

L. Tru. He's very good-natured.

Ab. He ought to be so; for he's very silly.

L. Tru. Dost thou think he loves me?

Ab. Mr Fantome did, I'm sure.

L. Tru. With what raptures he talked!

Ab. Yes; but 'twas in praise of your jointure-house.

L. Tru. He has kept bad company.

Ab. They must be very bad indeed, if they were worse than himself.

L. Tru. I have a strong fancy a good woman might reform him.

Ab. It would be a fine experiment, if it should not succeed.

L. Tru. Well, Abigail, we'll talk of that another time. Here comes the steward. I have no further occasion for you at present. [*Exit* AB.

Enter VELLUM.

Vel. Madam, is your ho—nour at leisure to look into the accounts of the last week? They rise very high. House-keeping is chargeable in a house that is haunted.

L. Tru. How comes that to pass? I hope the drum neither eats nor drinks. But read your account, Vellum.

Vel. [*Putting on and off his spectacles in this scene.*] A hogshead and a half of ale.—It is not for the ghost's drinking; but your ho—nour's servants say they must have something to keep up their courage against this strange noise. They tell me they expect a double quantity of malt in their small beer, so long as the house continues in this condition.

L. Tru. At this rate, they'll take care to be frightened all the year round, I'll answer for them. But go on.

Vel. Item, Two sheep and a—Where is the ox?—Oh, here I have him—and an ox—Your ho—nour must always have a piece of cold beef in the house, for the entertainment of so many strangers, who come from all parts to hear this drum. *Item*, Bread, ten peck loaves——They cannot eat beef without bread. *Item*, Three barrels of table beer —They must have drink with their meat.

L. Tru. Sure no woman in England has a steward that makes such ingenious comments on his works! [*Aside.*

Vel. Item, To Mr Tinsel's servants five bottles of port wine—It was by your ho—nour's order.

Item, Three bottles of sack, for the use of Mrs Abigail.

L. Tru. I suppose that was by your own order.

Vel. We have been long friends: we are your ho—nour's ancient servants. Sack is an innocent cordial, and gives her spirit to chide the servants, when they are tardy in their business; he, he, he! Pardon me for being jocular.

L. Tru. Well, I see you'll come together at last.

Vel. Item, A dozen pound of watch-lights, for the use of the servants.

L. Tru. For the use of the servants! What, are the rogues afraid of sleeping in the dark?—What an unfortunate woman am I! This is such a particular distress, it puts me to my wits end.—Vellum, what would you advise me to do?

Vel. Madam, your ho—nour has two points to consider. *Imprimis*, To retrench these extravagant expences, which bring so many strangers upon you—Secondly, To clear the house of this invisible drummer.

L. Tru. This learned division leaves me just as wise as I was. But how must we bring these two points to bear?

Vel. I beseech your ho—nour to give me the hearing.

L. Tru. I do. But, pr'ythee, take pity on me, and be not tedious.

Vel. I will be concise.—There is a certain person arrived this morning, an aged man, of a venerable aspect, and of a long, hoary beard, that reacheth down to his girdle. The common people call him a wizard, a white witch, a conjuror, a cunning man, a necromancer, a—

L. Tru. No matter for his titles. But what of all this?

Vel. Give me the hearing, good my lady He pretends to great skill in the occult sciences, and is come hither upon the rumour of this drum. If one may believe him, he knows the secret of laying ghosts, or of quieting houses that are haunted.

L. Tru. Pho! these are idle stories, to amuse the country people:—this can do us no good.

Vel. It can do us no harm, my lady.

L. Tru. I dare say thou dost not believe there is any thing in it thyself.

Vel. I cannot say I do: there is no danger, however, in the experiment. Let him try his skill: if it should succeed, we are rid of the drum; if it should not, we may tell the world that it has, and by that means, at least, get out of this expensive way of living; so that it must turn to your advantage one way or another.

L. Tru. I think you argue very rightly. But where is the man? I would fain see him. He must be a curiosity.

Vel. I have already discoursed him, and he is to be with me in my office half an hour hence. He asks nothing for his pains till he has done his work—No cure, no money.

L. Tru. That circumstance, I must confess, would make one believe there is more in his art than one would imagine. Pray, Vellum, go and fetch him hither immediately.

Vel. I am gone. He shall be forth-coming forthwith. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Butler, Coachman, and Gardener.

But. Rare news, my lads! rare news!

Gard. What's the matter? Hast thou got any more vails for us?

But. No. 'tis better than that.

Coach. Is there another stranger come to the house?

But. Ay, such a stranger as will make all our lives easy.

Gard. What, is he a lord?

But. A lord! No, nothing like it—He's a conjuror.

Coach. A conjuror! What, is he come a wooing to my lady?

But. No, no, you fool; he's come a purpose to lay the spirit.

Coach. Ay, marry, that's good news indeed.—But where is he?

But. He is locked up with the steward in his office. They are laying their heads together very close. I fancy they are casting a figure.

Gard. Pr'ythee, John, what sort of a creature is a conjuror?

But. Why, he's made much as other men are, if it was not for his long grey beard.

Coach. Look ye, Peter, it stands with reason that a conjuror should have a long grey beard; for did ye ever know a witch that was not an old woman?

Gard. Why, I remember a conjuror once at a fair, that, to my thinking, was a very smoke-faced man, and yet he spewed out fifty yards of green ferret. I fancy, John, if thou'dst get him into the pantry, and give him a cup of ale, he'd shew us a few tricks. Dost think we could not persuade him to swallow one of thy case-knives for his diversion? He'll certainly bring it up again.

But. Peter, thou art such a wiseacre—thou dost not know the difference between a conjuror and a juggler! This man must be a very great master of his trade. His beard is at least half a yard long: he's dressed in a strange dark cloak, as black as a coal. Your conjuror always goes in mourning.

Gard. Is he a gentleman? Had he a sword by his side?

But. No, no, he's too grave a man for that: a conjuror is as grave as a judge. But he had a long white wand in his hand.

Coach. You may be sure there's a good deal of virtue in that wand—I fancy 'tis made out of witch-elm.

Gard. I warrant you, if the ghost appears, he'll whisk ye that wand before his eyes, and strike you the drum-stick out of his hand.

But. No; the wand, look ye, is to make a circle; and if he once gets the ghost in a circle, then he has him; let him get out again if he can. A circle, you must know, is a conjuror's trap.

Coach. But what will he do with him when he has him there?

But. Why, then he'll overpower him with his learning.

Gard. If he can once compass him, and get him in Lob's Pound, he'll make nothing of him, but speak a few hard words to him, and perhaps bind him over to his good behaviour for a thousand years.

Coach. Ay, ay, he'll send him packing to his grave again, with a flea in his ear, I warrant him.

But. No, no, I would advise madam to spare no cost. If the conjuror be but well paid, he'll take pains upon the ghost, and lay him, look ye, in the Red Sea——and then he's laid for ever.

Coach. Ay, marry, that would spoil his drum for him.

Gard. Why, John, there must be a power of spirits in that same Red Sea——I warrant ye, they are as plenty as fish.

Coach. Well, I wish, after all, that he may not be too hard for the conjuror. I'm afraid he'll find a tough bit of work on't.

Gard. I wish the spirit may not carry a corner of the house off with him.

But. As for that, Peter, you may be sure that the steward has made his bargain with the cunning-man before hand, that he shall stand to all costs and damages.——But hark! yonder's Mrs Abigail; we shall have her with us immediately, if we do not get off.

Gard. Ay, lads, if we could get Mrs Abigail well laid too, we should lead merry lives.

For, to a man like me, that's stout and bold,
A ghost is not so dreadful as a scold. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I—*Opens, and discovers Sir* GEORGE *in* VELLUM'S *Office.*

Sir Geo. I wonder I don't hear of Vellum yet. But I know his wisdom will do nothing rashly. This fellow has been so used to form in business, that it has infected his whole conversation. But I must not find fault with that punctual and exact behaviour which has been of so much use to me; my estate is the better for it.

Enter VELLUM.

Well, Vellum, I'm impatient to hear your success.

Vel. First, let me lock the door.

Sir Geo. Will your lady admit me?

Vel. If this lock is not mended soon, it will be quite spoiled.

Sir Geo. Pr'ythee, let the lock alone at present, and answer me.

Vel. Delays in business are dangerous—I must send for the smith next week, and, in the mean time, will take a minute of it.

Sir Geo. But what says your lady?

Vel. This pen is naught, and wants mending—My lady, did you say?

Sir Geo. Does she admit me?

Vel. I have gained admission for you as a conjuror.

Sir Geo. That's enough—I'll gain admission for myself as a husband.—Does she believe there's any thing in my art?

Vel. It is hard to know what a woman believes.

Sir Geo. Did she ask no questions about me?

Vel. Sundry——She desires to talk with you herself, before you enter upon your business.

Sir Geo. But when?

Vel. Immediately——this instant.

Sir Geo. Pugh! what hast thou been doing all this while? Why didst not tell me so? Give me my cloak.—Have you yet met with Abigail?

Vel. I have not yet had an opportunity of talking with her, but we have interchanged some languishing glances.

Sir Geo. Let thee alone for that, Vellum. I have formerly seen thee ogle her through thy spectacles.—Well, this is a most venerable cloak. After the business of this day is over, I'll make thee a present of it: 'twill become thee mightily.

Vel. He, he, he! Would you make a conjuror of your steward?

Sir Geo. Pr'ythee, don't be jocular: I'm in haste.—Help me on with my beard.

Vel. And what will your ho—nour do with your cast beard?

Sir Geo. Why, faith, thy gravity wants only such a beard to it. If thou wouldst wear it with the cloak, thou wouldst make a most complete heathen philosopher.—But where's my wand?

Vel. A fine taper stick—It is well chosen. I will keep this till you are sheriff of the county. It is not my custom to let any thing be lost.

Sir Geo. Come, Vellum, lead the way. You must introduce me to your lady. Thou art the fittest fellow in the world to be master of the ceremonies to a conjuror. [*Exeunt.*

Enter ABIGAIL, *crossing the stage,* TINSEL *following.*

Tin. Nabby, Nabby, whither so fast, child?

Ab. Keep your hands to yourself. I'm going to call the steward to my lady.

Tin. What, Goodman Twofold? I met him walking with a strange old fellow yonder. I suppose he belongs to the family too. He looks very antique. He must be some of the furniture of this old mansion-house.

Ab. What does the man mean? Don't think to palm me, as you do my lady.

Tin. Pr'ythee, Nabby, tell me one thing—What's the reason thou art my enemy?

Ab. Marry, because I'm a friend to my lady.

Tin. Dost thou see any thing about me thon

dost not like?—Come hither, hussy—Give me a kiss. Don't be ill natured.

Ab. Sir, I know how to be civil. [*Kisses her.*] This rogue will carry off my lady, if I don't take care. [*Aside.*

Tin. Thy lips are as soft as velvet, Abigail. I must get thee a husband.

Ab. Ay, now you don't speak idly—I can talk to you.

Tin. I have one in my eye for thee.—Dost thou love a young lusty son of a whore?

Ab. Lud, how you talk!

Tin. This is a thundering dog.

Ab. What is he?

Tin. A private gentleman.

Ab. Ay!—Where does he live?

Tin. In the Horse-Guards.—But he has one fault I must tell thee of; if thou canst bear with that, he's a man for thy purpose.

Ab. Pray, Mr Tinsel, what may that be?

Tin. He's but five-and-twenty years old.

Ab. 'Tis no matter for his age, if he has been well educated.

Tin. No man better, child:—He'll tie a wig, toss a die, make a pass, and swear with such a grace, as would make thy heart leap to hear him.

Ab. Half these accomplishments will do, provided he has an estate.——Pray, what has he?

Tin. Not a farthing.

Ab. Pox on him!——What do I give him the hearing for? [*Aside.*

Tin. But as for that, I would make it up to him.

Ab. How?

Tin. Why, look ye, child, as soon as I have married thy lady, I design to discard this old prig of a steward, and to put this honest gentleman I am speaking of into his place.

Ab. [*Aside.*] This fellow's a fool——I'll have no more to say to him.——Hark! my lady's a-coming.

Tin. Depend upon it, Nab, I'll remember my promise.

Ab. Ay, and so will I too, to your cost. [*Aside. Exit* AB.

Tin. My dear is purely fitted up with a maid—But I shall rid the house of her.

Enter Lady TRUMAN.

L. Tru. Oh, Mr Tinsel, I am glad to meet you here. I am going to give you an entertainment that won't be disagreeable to a man of wit and pleasure of the town.——There may be something diverting in a conversation between a conjuror and this conceited ass.

Tin. She loves me to distraction, I see that. [*Aside.*]—Pr'ythee, widow, explain thyself.

L. Tru. You must know, here is a strange sort of a man come to town, who undertakes to free the house from this disturbance. The steward believes him a conjuror.

Tin. Ay, thy steward is a deep one.

L. Tru. He's to be here immediately. It is indeed an odd figure of a man.

Tin. Oh, I warrant you, he has studied the black art! Ha, ha, ha! Is he not an Oxford scholar?—Widow, thy house is the most extraordinarily inhabited of any widow's this day in Christendom. I think thy four chief domestics are, a withered Abigail, a superannuated steward, a ghost, and a conjuror.

L. Tru. [*Mimicking* TINSEL.] And you would have it inhabited by a fifth, who is a more extraordinary person than any of all these four.

Tin. 'Tis a sure sign a woman loves you, when she imitates your manner. [*Aside.*] Thou'rt very smart, my dear. But see, smoke the doctor.

Enter VELLUM, *and Sir* GEORGE, *in his Conjuror's Habit.*

Vel. I will introduce this profound person to your ladyship, and then leave him with you.——Sir, this is her ho—nour.

Sir Geo. I know it well. [*Exit* VEL. [*Aside, walking in a musing posture.*] That dear woman! the sight of her unmans me. I could weep for tenderness, did not I, at the same time, feel an indignation rise in me to see that wretch with her: And yet I cannot but smile to see her in the company of her first and second husband at the same time.

L. Tru. Mr Tinsel, do you speak to him: you are used to the company of men of learning.

Tin. Old gentleman, thou dost not look like an inhabitant of this world; I suppose thou art lately come down from the stars. Pray, what news is stirring in the Zodiac?

Sir Geo. News that ought to make the heart of a coward tremble.—Mars is now entering into the first house, and will shortly appear in all his domal dignities.

Tin. Mars!—Pr'ythee, Father Grey-beard, explain thyself.

Sir Geo. The entrance of Mars into his house portends the entrance of a master into this family—and that soon.

Tin. D'ye hear that, widow? The stars have cut me out for thy husband. This house is to have a master, and that soon.—Hark thee, old Gadbury? Is not Mars very like a young fellow called Tom Tinsel?

Sir Geo. Not so much as Venus is like this lady.

Tin. A word in your ear, doctor:—These two planets will be in conjunction by and by; I can tell you that.

Sir Geo. [*Aside, walking disturbed.*] Curse on this impertinent fop! I shall scarce forbear discovering myself.——Madam, I am told that your house is visited with strange noises.

L. Tru. And I am told that you can quiet them. I must confess I had a curiosity to see the person I had heard so much of; and indeed your aspect shews that you have had much experience in the world. You must be a very aged man.

Sir Geo. My aspect deceives you:—What do you think is my real age?

Tin. I should guess thee within three years of Methusalah. Pr'ythee, tell me, wast not thou born before the flood?

L. Tru. Truly, I should guess you to be in your second or third century. I warrant you, you have great-grandchildren with beards a foot long.

Sir Geo. Ha, ha, ha! If there be truth in man, I was but five-and-thirty last August. Oh, the study of the occult sciences makes a man's beard grow faster than you would imagine.

L. Tru. What an escape you have had, Mr Tinsel, that you were not bred a scholar.

Tin. And so I fancy, doctor, thou thinkest me an illiterate fellow, because I have a smooth chin?

Sir Geo. Hark ye, sir, a word in your ear.—You are a coxcomb, by all the rules of physiognomy: but let that be a secret between you and me. [*Aside to* TINSEL.

L. Tru. Pray, Mr Tinsel, what is it the doctor whispers?

Tin. Only a compliment, child, upon two or three of my features. It does not become me to repeat it.

L. Tru. Pray, doctor, examine this gentleman's face, and tell me his fortune.

Sir Geo. If I may believe the lines of his face, he likes it better than I do, or—than you do, fair lady.

Tin. Widow, I hope now thou'rt convinced he's a cheat.

L. Tru. For my part, I believe he's a witch.—Go on, doctor.

Sir Geo. He will be crossed in love, and that soon.

Tin. Pr'ythee, doctor, tell us the truth.—Dost not thou live in Moorfields?

Sir Geo. Take my word for it, thou shalt never live in my lady Truman's mansion-house.

Tin. Pray, old gentleman, hast thou never been plucked by the beard when thou wert saucy?

L. Tru. Nay, Mr Tinsel, you are angry:—Do you think I would marry a man that dares not have his fortune told?

Sir Geo. Let him be angry—I matter not.—He is but short-lived: He will soon die of——

Tin. Come, come, speak out, old Hocus; he, he, he! This fellow makes me burst with laughing. [*Forces a laugh.*

Sir Geo. He will soon die of a fright—or of the ——Let me see your nose——Ay——'tis so.

Tin. You son of a whore! I'll run ye through the body. I never yet made the sun shine through a conjuror.

L. Tru. Oh fie, Mr Tinsel! you will not kill an old man?

Tin. An old man! The dog says he's but five-and-thirty.

L. Tru. Oh fie, Mr Tinsel, I did not think you could have been so passionate: I hate a passionate man. Put up your sword, or I must never see you again.

Tin. Ha, ha, ha! I was but in jest, my dear. I had a mind to have made an experiment upon the doctor's body. I would but have drilled a little eye-let hole in it, and have seen whether he had art enough to close it up again.

Sir Geo. Courage is but ill shown before a lady. But know, if ever I meet thee again, thou shalt find this arm can wield other weapons besides this wand.

Tin. Ha, ha, ha!

L. Tru. Well, learned sir, you are to give a proof of your art, not of your courage; or if you will shew your courage, let it be at nine o'clock; for that is the time the noise is generally heard.

Tin. And look ye, old gentleman, if thou dost not do thy business well, I can tell thee, by the little skill I have, that thou wilt be tossed in a blanket before ten. We'll do our endeavour to send thee back to the stars again.

Sir Geo. I'll go and prepare myself for the ceremonies——And, lady, as you expect they should succeed to your wishes, treat that fellow with the contempt he deserves. [*Exit Sir* GEORGE.

Tin. The sauciest dog I ever talked with in my whole life!

L. Tru. Methinks he's a diverting fellow: one may see he's no fool.

Tin. No fool! Ay, but thou dost not take him for a conjuror.

L. Tru. Truly, I don't know what to take him for: I am resolved to employ him however. When a sickness is desperate, we often try remedies that we have no great faith in.

Enter ABIGAIL.

Ab. Madam, the tea is ready in the parlour, as you ordered.

L. Tru. Come, Mr Tinsel, we may there talk of the subject more at leisure.

[*Exeunt L.* TRU. *and* TIN.

Ab. Sure never any lady had such servants as mine has! Well, if I get this thousand pounds, I hope to have some of my own. Let me see,—I'll have a pretty tight girl—just such as I was ten years ago, (I'm afraid I may say twenty:) she shall dress me and flatter me—for I will be flattered, that's pos! My lady's cast suits will serve her after I have given them the wearing. Besides, when I am worth a thousand pounds, I shall certainly carry off the steward——Madam Vellum—how prettily that will sound!——Here, bring out Madam Vellum's chaise—Nay, I do not know but it may be a chariot—It will break the attorney's wife's heart—for I shall take place of every body in the parish but my lady. If I have a son, he shall be called Fantome.—But see—Mr Vellum, as I could wish. I know his humour, and will do my utmost to gain his heart.

Enter VELLUM, *with a Pint of Sack.*

Vel. Mrs Abigail, don't I break in upon you unseasonably?

Ab. Oh no, Mr Vellum, your visits are always seasonable.

Vel. I have brought with me a taste of fresh Canary, which I think is delicious.

Ab. Pray set it down——I have a dram-glass just by—[*Brings in a rummer.*] I'll pledge you to my lady's good health.

Vel. And your own with it—sweet Mrs Abigail.

Ab. Pray, good Mr Vellum, buy me a little parcel of this sack, and put it under the article of tea——I would not have my name appear to it.

Vel. Mrs Abigail, your name seldom appears in my bills——and yet—if you will allow me a merry expression—you have been always in my books, Mrs Abigail. Ha, ha, ha!

Ab. Ha, ha, ha! Mr Vellum, you are such a dry jesting man!

Vel. Why, truly, Mrs Abigail, I have been looking over my papers—and I find you have been a long time my debtor.

Ab. Your debtor! For what, Mr Vellum?

Vel. For my heart, Mrs Abigail—And our accounts will not be balanced between us till I have yours in exchange for it. Ha, ha, ha!

Ab. Ha, ha ha! You are the most gallant dun, Mr Vellum.

Vel. But I am not used to be paid by words only, Mrs Abigail.—When will you be out of my debt?

Ab. Oh, Mr Vellum, you make one blush——My humble service to you.

Vel. I must answer you, Mrs Abigail, in the country phrase.—Your love is sufficient, Ha, ha, ha!

Ab. Ha, ha, ha! Well, I must own I love a merry man!

Vel. Let me see, how long is it, Mrs Abigail, since I first broke my mind to you——It was, I think *undecimo Gulielmi*.—We have conversed together these fifteen years—and yet, Mrs Abigail, I must drink to our better acquaintance. He, he, he!—Mrs Abigail, you know I am naturally jocose.

Ab. Ah! you men love to make sport with us silly creatures.

Vel. Mrs Abigail, I have a trifle about me, which I would willingly make you a present of. It is indeed but a little toy.

Ab. You are always exceedingly obliging.

Vel. It is but a little toy—scarce worth your acceptance.

Ab. Pray don't keep me in suspence:—What is it, Mr Vellum?

Vel. A silver thimble.

Ab. I always said Mr Vellum was a generous lover.

Vel. But I must put it on myself, Mrs Abigail—You have the prettiest tip of a finger—I must take the freedom to salute it.

Ab. Oh fie! you make me ashamed, Mr Vellum: How can you do so? I protest I am in such a confusion— [*A feigned struggle.*

Vel. This finger is not the finger of idleness; it bears the honourable scars of the needle—But why are you so cruel as not to pair your nails?

Ab. Oh, I vow you press it so hard! Pray give me my finger again.

Vel. This middle finger, Mrs Abigail, has a pretty neighbour—A wedding ring would become it mightily—He, he, he!

Ab. You're so full of your jokes.——Ay, but where must I find one for it?

Vel. I design this thimble only as the forerunner of it: they will set off each other, and are—indeed a twofold emblem. The first will put you in mind of being a good housewife, and the other of being a good wife. Ha, ha, ha!

Ab. Yes, yes, I see you laugh at me.

Vel. Indeed I am serious.

Ab. I thought you had quite forsaken me—I am sure you cannot forget the many repeated vows and promises you formerly made me.

Vel. I should as soon forget the multiplication table.

Ab. I have always taken your part before my lady.

Vel. You have so, and I have *itemed* it in my memory.

Ab. For I have always looked upon your interest as my own.

Vel. It is nothing but your cruelty can hinder them from being so.

Ab. I must strike while the iron's hot. [*Aside.*] —Well, Mr Vellum, there is no refusing you, you have such a bewitching tongue!

Vel. How? Speak that again!

Ab. Why then, in plain English, I love you.

Vel. I am overjoyed!

Ab. I must own my passion for you.

Vel. I'm transported!

[*Catching her in his arms.*

Ab. Dear, charming man!

Vel. Thou sum total of all my happiness! I shall grow extravagant! I cann't forbear—to drink thy virtuous inclinations in a bumper of sack.—Your lady must make haste, my duck, or we shall provide a young steward to the estate, before she has an heir to it.—Pr'ythee, my dear, does she intend to marry Mr Tinsel?

Ab. Marry him, my love! No, no; we must take care of that! there would be no staying in the house for us if she did. That young rake-hell would send all the old servants a-grazing. You and I should be discarded before the honey-moon was at an end.

Vel. Pr'ythee, sweet one, does not this drum put the thoughts of marriage out of her head?

Ab. This drum, my dear, if it be well managed, will be no less than a thousand pounds in our way.

Vel. Ay, say'st thou so, my turtle?

Ab. Since we are now as good as man and wife—I mean, almost as good as man and wife——I ought to conceal nothing from you.

Vel. Certainly, my dove, not from thy yoke-fellow, thy help-mate, thy own flesh and blood!

Ab. Hush! I hear Mr Tinsel's laugh: my lady and he are a-coming this way.—If you will take a turn without, I'll tell you the whole contrivance.

Vel. Give me your hand, chicken.

Ab. Here, take it; you have my heart already.

Vel. We shall have much issue. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter VELLUM *and Butler.*

Vel. John, I have certain orders to give you —and therefore be attentive.

But. Attentive! Ay, let me alone for that.—I suppose he means being sober. [*Aside.*

Vel. You know I have always recommended to you a method in your busines: I would have your knives and forks, your spoons and napkins, your plate and glasses, laid in a method.

But. Ay, Master Vellum! you are such a sweet-spoken man, it does one's heart good to receive your orders.

Vel. Method, John, makes business easy: it banishes all perplexity and confusion out of families.

But. How he talks! I could hear him all day.

Vel. And now, John, let me know whether your table-linen, your side-board, your cellar, and every thing else within your province, are properly and methodically disposed for an entertainment this evening.

But. Master Vellum, they shall be ready at a quarter of an hour's warning. But pray, sir, is this entertainment to be made for the conjuror?

Vel. It is, John, for the conjuror, and yet it is not for the conjuror.

But. Why look you, Master Vellum, if it is for the conjuror, the cook-maid should have orders to get him some dishes to his palate. Perhaps he may like a little brimstone in his sauce.

Vel. This conjuror, John, is a complicated creature, an amphibious animal, a person of a twofold nature—But he eats and drinks like other men.

But. Marry, Master Vellum, he should eat and drink as much as two other men, by the account you give of him.

Vel. Thy conceit is not amiss: he is indeed a double man; ha, ha, ha!

But. Ha! I understand you; he's one of your hermaphrodites, as they call them.

Vel. He is married, and he is not married—He hath a beard, and he hath no beard—He is old, and he is young.

But. How charmingly he talks! I fancy, Master Vellum, you could make a riddle. The same man old and young! How do you make that out, Master Vellum?

Vel. Thou hast heard of a snake casting his skin, and recovering his youth. Such is this sage person.

But. Nay, 'tis no wonder a conjuror should be like a serpent.

Vel. When he has thrown aside the old conjuror's slough that hangs about him, he'll come out as fine a young gentleman as ever was seen in this house.

But. Does he intend to sup in his slough?

Vel. That time will shew.

But. Well, I have not a head for these things. Indeed, Mr Vellum, I have not understood one word you have said this half hour.

Vel. I did not intend thou shouldst.—But to our business.—Let there be a table spread in the great hall. Let your pots and glasses be washed, and in a readiness. Bid the cook provide a plentiful supper; and see that all the servants are in their best liveries.

But. Ay, now I understand every word you say. But I would rather hear you talk a little in that t'other way.

Vel. I shall explain to thee what I have said by and by.—Bid Susan lay two pillows upon your lady's bed.

But Two pillows! Madam won't sleep upon them both! She is not a double woman too?

Vel. She will sleep upon neither.—But hark, Mrs Abigail; I think I hear her chiding the cook-maid.

But. Then I'll away, or it will be my turn next: —She, I am sure, speaks plain English: one may easily understand every word she says.

[*Exit Butler.*

Vel. Servants are good for nothing, unless they have an opinion of the person's understanding who has the direction of them.—But see, Mrs Abigail! she has a bewitching countenance: I wish I may not be tempted to marry her in good earnest.

Enter ABIGAIL.

Ab. Ha! Mr Vellum.

Vel. What brings my sweet one hither?

Ab. I am coming to speak to my friend behind the wainscot. It is fit, child, he should have an account of this conjuror, that he may not be surprised.

Vel. That would be as much as thy thousand pounds is worth.

Ab. I'll speak low—Walls have ears.

[*Pointing at the wainscot.*

Vel. But hark you, duckling! be sure you do not tell him that I am let into the secret.

Ab. That's a good one indeed! as if I should ever tell what passes between you and me.

Vel. No, no, my child, that must not be! he, he, he! that must not be; he, he, he!

Ab. You will always be waggish.

Vel. Adieu, and let me hear the result of your conference.

Ab. How can you leave one so soon? I shall think it an age till I see you again.

Vel. Adieu, my pretty one!

Ab. Adieu, sweet Mr Vellum!

Vel. My pretty one! [*As he is going off.*

Ab. Dear Mr Vellum!

Vel. My pretty one! [*Exit.*

Ab. I have him—If I can but get this thousand pounds.

[FANT. *gives three raps upon his drum behind the wainscot.*

Ab. Ha! Three raps upon the drum! the signal Mr Fantome and I agreed upon, when he had a mind to speak with me. [FANTOME *raps again.* Very well, I hear you.—Come, fox, come out of your hole.

SCENE II—*Opens, and* FANTOME *comes out.*

Ab. You may leave your drum in the wardrobe, till you have occasion for it.

Fan. Well, Mrs Abigail, I want to hear what's doing in the world.

Ab. You are a very inquisitive spirit. But I must tell you, if you do not take care of yourself, you will be laid this evening.

Fan. I have overheard something of that matter. But let me alone for the doctor—I'll engage to give a good account of him. I am more in pain about Tinsel. When a lady's in the case, I'm more afraid of one fop than twenty conjurors.

Ab. To tell you truly, he presses his attacks with so much impudence, that he has made more progress with my lady in two days than you did in two months.

Fan. I shall attack her in another manner, if thou canst but procure me another interview.—There's nothing makes a lover so keen as being kept up in the dark.

Ab. Pray, no more of your distant bows, your respectful compliments——Really, Mr Fantome, you're only fit to make love across a tea-table.

Fan. My dear girl, I cann't forbear hugging thee for thy good advice.

Ab. Ay, now I have some hopes of you; but why don't you do so to my lady?

Fan. Child, I always thought your lady loved to be treated with respect.

Ab. Believe me, Mr Fantome, there is not so great a difference between woman and woman as you imagine. You see Tinsel has nothing but his sauciness to recommend him.

Fan. Tinsel is too great a coxcomb to be capable of love—And let me tell thee, Abigail, a man who is sincere in his passion makes but a very awkward profession of it——But I'll mend my manners.

Ab. Ay, or you'll never gain a widow—Come, I must tutor you a little.—Suppose me to be my lady, and let me see how you'll behave yourself.

Fan. I'm afraid, child, we ha'n't time for such a piece of mummery.

Ab. Oh, it will be quickly over, if you play your part well.

Fan. Why, then, dear Mrs Ab——I mean, my lady Truman.

Ab. Ay, but you ha'n't saluted me.

Fan. That's right: faith, I forgot that circumstance. [*Kisses her.*] Nectar and ambrosia!

Ab. That's very well.

Fan. How long must I be condemned to languish? When shall my sufferings have an end? My life, my happiness, my all is wound up in you.

Ab. Well, why don't you squeeze my hand?

Fan. What! thus?

Ab. Thus. Ay.—Now throw your arm about my middle: hug me closer.—You are not afraid of hurting me! Now pour forth a volley of rapture and nonsense, till you are out of breath.

Fan. Transport and ecstacy! Where am I?—My life, my bliss!—I rage, I burn, I bleed, I die!

Ab. Go on, go on.

Fan. Flames and darts—Bear me to the gloomy shade, rocks, and grottos—flowers, zephyrs, and purling streams.

Ab. Oh, Mr Fantome, you have a tongue would undo a vestal! You were born for the ruin of our sex.

Fan. This will do then, Abigail?

Ab. Ay, this is talking like a lover; though I only represent my lady, I take pleasure in hearing you. Well, o' my conscience, when a man of sense has a little dash of the coxcomb in him, no woman can resist him. Go on at this rate, and the thousand pounds is as good as in my pocket.

Fan. I shall think it an age till I have an opportunity of putting this lesson in practice.

Ab. You may do it soon, if you make good use of your time. Mr Tinsel will be here with my lady at eight, and at nine the conjuror is to take you in hand.

Fan. Let me alone with both of them.

Ab. Well! forewarn'd, fore-arm'd.——Get into your box, and I'll endeavour to dispose every thing in your favour.

[FANTOME *goes in.* *Exit* ABIGAIL.

Enter VELLUM.

Vel. Mrs Abigail is withdrawn—I was in hopes to have heard what passed between her and her invisible correspondent.

Enter TINSEL.

Tin. Vellum! Vellum!

Vel. [*Aside.*] Vellum! We are, methinks, very familiar! I am not used to be called so by any but their ho—nours.——What would you, Mr Tinsel?

Tin. Let me beg a favour of thee, old gentleman.

Vel. What is that, good sir?

Tin. Pr'ythee run and fetch me the rent-roll of thy lady's estate.

Vel. The rent-roll!

Tin. The rent-roll! Ay, the rent-roll! Dost not understand what that means?

Vel. Why, have you thoughts of purchasing of it?

Tin. Thou hast hit it, old boy! That is my very intention.

Vel. The purchase will be considerable.

Tin. And for that reason I have bid thy lady

very high—She is to have no less for it than this entire person of mine.

Vel. Is your whole estate personal, Mr Tinsel —he, he, he!

Tin. Why, you queer old dog, you don't pretend to jest, d'ye? Look ye, Vellum, if you think of being continued my steward, you must learn to walk with your toes out.

Vel. [*Aside.*] An insolent companion!

Tin. Thou'rt confounded rich, I see, by that dangling of thy arms.

Vel. [*Aside.*] An ungracious bird!

Tin. Thou shalt lend me a couple of thousand pounds.

Vel. [*Aside.*] A very profligate!

Tin. Look ye, Vellum, I intend to be kind to you—I'll borrow some money of you.

Vel. I cannot but smile to consider the disappointment this young fellow will meet with: I will make myself merry with him. [*Aside.*]—And so, Mr Tinsel, you promise you will be a very kind master to me. [*Stifling a laugh.*

Tin. What will you give for a life in the house you live in?

Vel. What do you think of five hundred pounds? —Ha, ha, ha!

Tin. That's too little.

Vel. And yet it is more than I shall give you— And I will offer you two reasons for it.

Tin. Pr'ythee, what are they?

Vel. First, because the tenement is not in your disposal; and, secondly, because it never will be in your disposal; and so fare thee well, good Mr Tinsel. Ha, ha, ha! You will pardon me for being jocular. [*Exit* VELLUM.

Tin. This rogue is as saucy as the conjuror: I'll be hanged if they are not a-kin.

Enter Lady TRUMAN.

L. Tru. Mr Tinsel! What! all alone? You free-thinkers are great admirers of solitude.

Tin. No, faith, I have been talking with thy steward, a very grotesque figure of a fellow, the very picture of one of our benchers. How can you bear his conversation?

L. Tru. I keep him for my steward, and not my companion: He's a sober man.

Tin. Yes, yes, he looks like a put; a queer old dog, as ever I saw in my life: We must turn him off, widow. He cheats thee confoundedly, I see that.

L. Tru. Indeed you're mistaken: he has always had the reputation of being a very honest man.

Tin. What! I suppose he goes to church.

L. Tru. Goes to church! So do you too, I hope.

Tin. I would for once, widow, to make sure of you.

L. Tru. Ah, Mr Tinsel! a husband who would not continue to go thither would quickly forget the promises he made there.

Tin. Faith, very innocent, and very ridiculous! Well then, I warrant thee, widow, thou wouldst not for the world marry a Sabbath-breaker!

L. Tru. Truly they generally come to a bad end. I remember the conjuror told you you were short-liv'd.

Tin. The conjuror! Ha, ha, ha!

L. Tru. Indeed, you're very witty!

Tin. Indeed you're very handsome! [*Kisses her hand.*

L. Tru. I wish the fool does not love me. [*Aside.*

Tin. Thou art the idol I adore: here must I pay my devotion.——Pr'ythee, widow, hast thou any timber upon thy estate?

L. Tru. The most impudent fellow I ever met with. [*Aside.*

Tin. I take notice thou hast a great deal of old plate here in the house, widow.

L. Tru. Mr Tinsel, you are a very observing man.

Tin. Thy large silver cistern would make a very good coach, and half a dozen salvers, that I saw on the sideboard, might be turned into six as pretty horses as any that appear in the ring.

L. Tru. You have a very good fancy, Mr Tinsel.—What pretty transformations you could make in my house.——But I'll see where 'twill end. [*Aside.*

Tin. Then I observe, child, you have two or three services of gilt plate:—We'd eat always in china, my dear.

L. Tru. I perceive you are an excellent manager—How quickly you have taken an inventory of my goods.

Tin. Now, hark ye, widow, to shew you the love that I have for you———

L. Tru. Very well, let me hear.

Tin. You have an old-fashioned gold caudle-cup, with a figure of a saint upon the lid on't.

L. Tru. I have:—What then?

Tin. Why, look ye, I'd sell the caudle-cup with the old saint, for as much money as they'd fetch, which I would convert into a diamond buckle, and make you a present of it.

L. Tru. Oh, you are generous to an extravagance. But pray, Mr Tinsel, don't dispose of my goods before you are sure of my person. I find you have taken a great affection to my moveables.

Tin. My dear, I love every thing that belongs to you.

L. Tru. I see you do, sir: you need not make any protestations upon that subject.

Tin. Pho, pho! my dear, we are growing serious, and, let me tell you, that's the very next step to being dull. Come, that pretty face was never made to look grave with.

L. Tru. Believe me, sir, whatever you think, marriage is a serious subject.

Tin. For that very reason, my dear, let us run over it as fast as we can.

L. Tru. I should be very much in haste for a husband, if I married within fourteen months after Sir George's decease.

Tin. Pray, my dear, let me ask you a question:—Dost not thou think that Sir George is as dead at present, to all intents and purposes, as he will be a twelvemonth hence?

L. Tru. Yes; but decency, Mr Tinsel——

Tin. Or dost thou think thou'lt be more a widow then than thou art now?

L. Tru. The world would say I never loved my first husband.

Tin. Ah, my dear, they would say you loved your second; and they would own I deserved it; for I shall love thee most inordinately.

L. Tru. But what would people think?

Tin. Think! Why, they would think thee the mirror of widowhood——That a woman should live fourteen whole months, after the decease of her spouse, without having engaged herself. Why, about town, we know many a woman of quality's second husband several years before the death of the first.

L. Tru. Ay, I know you wits have your common-place jests upon us poor widows.

Tin. I'll tell you a story, widow:—I know a certain lady, who, considering the craziness of her husband, had, in case of mortality, engaged herself to two young fellows of my acquaintance. They grew such desperate rivals for her, while her husband was alive, that one of them pinked the other in a duel. But the good lady was no sooner a widow, but what did my dowager do? Why, faith, being a woman of honour, she married a third, to whom, it seems, she had given her first promise.

L. Tru. And is this a true story, upon your own knowledge?

Tin. Every tittle, as I hope to be married, or never believe Tom Tinsel.

L. Tru. Pray, Mr Tinsel, do you call this talking like a wit, or like a rake?

Tin. Innocent enough! He, he, he! Why, where's the difference, my dear?

L. Tru. Yes, Mr Tinsel, the only man I ever loved in my life had a great deal of the one, and nothing of the other in him.

Tin. Nay, now you grow vapourish: thou'lt begin to fancy thou hearest the drum by and by.

L. Tru. If you had been here last night about this time, you would not have been so merry.

Tin. About this time, say'st thou? Come, faith, for humour's sake, we'll sit down and listen.

L. Tru. I will, if you'll promise to be serious.

Tin. Serious! Never fear me, child; ha, ha, ha!—Dost not hear him?

L. Tru. You break your word already.—Pray, Mr Tinsel, do you laugh to shew your wit or your teeth?

Tin. Why, both, my dear.—I'm glad, however, that she has taken notice of my teeth. [*Aside.*] But you look serious, child: I fancy thou hearest the drum—dost not?

L. Tru. Don't talk so rashly.

Tin. Why, my dear, you could not look more frighted if you had Lucifer's drum-major in your house.

L. Tru. Mr Tinsel, I must desire to see you no more in it, if you do not leave this idle way of talking.

Tin. Child, I thought I had told you what is my opinion of spirits, as we were drinking a dish of tea but just now——There is no such thing, I give thee my word.

L. Tru. Oh, Mr Tinsel, your authority must be of great weight to those that know you.

Tin. For my part, child, I have made myself easy in those points.

L. Tru. Sure nothing was ever like this fellow's vanity but his ignorance. [*Aside.*

Tin. I'll tell thee what, now, widow—I would engage, by the help of a white sheet, and a pennyworth of link, in a dark night, to frighten you a whole country village out of their senses, and the vicar into the bargain. [*Drum beats.*] Hark! hark! what noise is that? Heaven defend us! This is more than fancy.

L. Tru. It beats more terrible than ever.

Tin. 'Tis very dreadful!—What a dog have I been, to speak against my conscience only to shew my parts?

L. Tru. It comes nearer and nearer. I wish you have not angered it, by your foolish discourse.

Tin. Indeed, madam, I did not speak from my heart. I hope it will do me no hurt for a little harmless raillery.

L. Tru. Harmless, d'ye call it?—It beats hard by us, as if it would break through the wall.

Tin. What a devil had I to do with a white sheet?—[*Scene opens, and discovers* FANTOME.] Mercy on us, it appears!

L. Tru. Oh, 'tis he! 'tis he himself! 'tis Sir George! 'tis my husband! [*She faints.*

Tin. Now would I give ten thousand pounds that I were in town. [FANTOME *advances to him drumming.*] I beg ten thousand pardons: I'll never talk at this rate any more. [FANTOME *still advances drumming.*] By my soul, Sir George, I was not in earnest. [*Falls on his knees.*] Have compassion on my youth, and consider I am but a coxcomb. [FANTOME *points to the door.*] But see, he waves me off—Ay, with all my heart—— What a devil had I to do with a white sheet? [*He steals off the stage, mending his pace as the drum beats.*

Fan. The scoundrel is gone, and has left his mistress behind him. I'm mistaken if he makes love in this house any more——I have now only the conjuror to deal with. I don't question but I shall make his reverence scamper as fast as the lover, and then the day's my own. But the servants are coming: I must get into my cupboard. [*He goes in.*

Enter ABIGAIL *and Servants.*

Ab. Oh, my poor lady! This wicked drum has frighted Mr Tinsel out of his wits, and my lady into a swoon. Let me bend her a little forward—She revives.—Here, carry her into the fresh air, and she'll recover. [*They carry her off.*] This is a little barbarous to my lady; but 'tis all for her good: and I know her so well, that she would not be angry with me, if she knew what I was to get by it. And if any of her friends should blame me for it hereafter,

I'll clap my hand upon my purse, and tell 'em,
'Twas for a thousand pounds, and Mr Vellum.

[*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter Sir GEORGE, *in his Conjuror's Habit; the Butler marching before him, with two large Candles, and the two Servants coming after him, one bringing a little Table, and another a Chair.*

But. An't please your worship, Mr Conjuror, the steward has given all of us orders to do whatsoever you shall bid us, and to pay you the same respect as if you were our master.

Sir Geo. Thou say'st well.

Gard. An't please your conjurorship's worship, shall I set the table down here?

Sir Geo. Here, Peter.

Gard. Peter!—He knows my name by his learning. [*Aside.*

Coach. I have brought you, reverend sir, the largest elbow-chair in the house: 'tis that the steward sits in when he holds a court.

Sir Geo. Place it there.

But. Sir, will you please to want any thing else?

Sir Geo. Paper, and pen, and ink.

But. Sir, I believe we have paper that is fit for your purpose—my lady's mourning paper, that is blacked at the edges.—Would you choose to write with a crow-quill?

Sir Geo. There is none better.

But. Coachman, go fetch the paper and standish out of the little parlour.

Coach. [*To Gard.*] Peter, pr'ythee, do thou go along with me—I'm afraid——You know I went with you last night into the garden, when the cook-maid wanted a handful of parsley.

But. Why, you don't think I'll stay with the conjuror by myself?

Gard. Come, we'll all three go and fetch the pen and ink together. [*Exeunt Servants.*

Sir Geo. There's nothing, I see, makes such strong alliances as fear. These fellows are all entered into a confederacy against the ghost. There must be abundance of business done in the family at this rate. But here comes the triple-alliance. Who could have thought these three rogues could have found each of them an employment in fetching a pen and ink!

Enter Gardener with a sheet of Paper, Coachman with a Standish, and Butler with a Pen.

Gard. Sir, there is your paper.

Coach. Sir, there is your standish.

But. Sir, there is your crow-quill pen——I'm glad I have got rid on't. [*Aside.*

Gard. [*Aside.*] He forgets that he's to make a circle——Doctor, shall I help you to a bit of chalk?

Sir Geo. It is no matter.

But. Look ye, sir, I shewed you the spot where he's heard oftenest. If your worship can but ferret him out of that old wall in the next room——

Sir Geo. We shall try.

Gard. That's right, John. His worship must let fly all his learning at that old wall.

But. Sir, if I was worthy to advise you, I would have a bottle of good October by me. Shall I set a cup of old stingo at your elbow?

Sir Geo. I thank thee—we shall do without it.

Gard. John, he seems a very good-natured man for a conjuror.

But. I'll take this opportunity of enquiring after a bit of plate I have lost. I fancy, whilst he is in my lady's pay, one may hedge in a question or two into the bargain.—Sir, sir, may I beg a word in your ear.

Sir Geo. What wouldst thou?

But. Sir, I know I need not tell you that I lost one of my silver spoons last week.

Sir Geo. Marked with a swan's neck.

But. My lady's crest! He knows every thing. [*Aside.*]——How would your worship advise me to recover it again?

Sir Geo. Hum.

But. What must I do to come at it?

Sir Geo. Drink nothing but small-beer for a fortnight.

But. Small-beer! Rot-gut!

Sir Geo. If thou drink'st a single drop of ale before fifteen days are expired——it is as much ——as thy spoon——is worth.

But. I shall never recover it in that way—— I'll e'en buy a new one. [*Aside.*

Coach. D'ye mind how they whisper?

Gard. I'll be hanged if he be not asking him something about Nell.

Coach. I'll take this opportunity of putting a question to him about poor Dobbin. I fancy he could give me better counsel than the farrier.

But. [*To Gard.*] A prodigious man! he knows every thing. Now is the time to find out thy pick-axe.

Gard. I have nothing to give him. Does not he expect to have his hand cross'd with silver?

Coach. [*To Sir* GEO.] Sir, may a man venture to ask you a question?

Sir Geo. Ask it.

Coach. I have a poor horse in the stable that's bewitched.

Sir Geo. A bay gelding.

Coach. How could he know that? [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Bought at Banbury.

Coach. Whew!—So it was, on my conscience. [*Whistles.*

Sir Geo. Six years old, last Lammas.

Coach. To a day. [*Aside.*] Now, sir, I would know whether the poor beast is bewitched by Goody Crouch, or Goody Fly?

Sir Geo. Neither.

Coach. Then it must be Goody Gurton; for she is the next oldest woman in the parish.

Gard. Hast thou done, Robin?

Coach. [*To Gard.*] He can tell thee any thing.

Gard. [*To Sir* GEO.] Sir, I would beg to take you a little further out of hearing.

Sir Geo. Speak.

Gard. The butler and I, Mr Doctor, were both of us in love, at the same time, with a certain person.

Sir Geo. A woman.

Gard. How could he know that? [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Go on.

Gard. This woman has lately had two children at a birth.

Sir Geo. Twins.

Gard. Prodigious! Where could he hear that? [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Proceed.

Gard. Now, because I used to meet her sometimes in the garden, she has laid them both—

Sir Geo. To thee.

Gard. What a power of learning he must have! He knows every thing. [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Hast thou done?

Gard. I would desire to know whether I am really father to them both?

Sir Geo. Stand before me; let me survey thee round.

[*Lays his wand upon his head, and makes him turn about.*

Coach. Look yonder, John, the silly dog is turning about under the conjuror's wand. If he has been saucy to him, we shall see him puffed off in a whirlwind immediately.

Sir Geo. Twins, dost thou say? [*Still turning him.*

Gard. Ay: are they both mine, d'ye think?

Sir Geo. Own but one of them.

Gard. Ay, but Mrs Abigail will have me take care of them both——she's always for the butler.——If my poor master, Sir George, had been alive, he would have made him go halves with me.

Sir Geo. What, was Sir George a kind master?

Gard. Was he! Ay, my fellow-servants will bear me witness.

Sir Geo. Did you love Sir George?

But. Every body loved him.

Coach. There was not a dry eye in the parish at the news of his death.

Gard. He was the best neighbour——

But. The kindest husband——

Coach. The truest friend to the poor——

But. My lady took on mightily: we all thought it would have been the death of her.

Sir Geo. I protest these fellows melt me——I think the time long till I am their master again, that I may be kind to them. [*Aside.*

Enter VELLUM.

Vel. Have you provided the doctor every thing he has occasion for?—If so—you may depart. [*Exeunt Servants.*

Sir Geo. I can, as yet, see no hurt in my wife's behaviour, but still have some certain pangs and doubts, that are natural to the heart of a fond man. I must take the advantage of my disguise, to be thoroughly satisfied. It would neither be for her happiness nor mine, to make myself known to her till I am so. [*Aside.*] Dear Vellum, I am impatient to hear some news of my wife. How does she, after her fright?

Vel. It is a saying somewhere in my lord Coke, that a widow——

Sir Geo. I ask of my wife, and thou talk'st to me of my lord Coke—Pr'ythee, tell me how she does; for I am in pain for her.

Vel. She is pretty well recovered. Mrs Abigail has put her in good heart, and I have given her great hopes from your skill.

Sir Geo. That, I think, cannot fail, since thou hast got this secret out of Abigail. But I could not have thought my friend Fantome would have served me thus.

Vel. You will still fancy you are a living man.

Sir Geo. That he should endeavour to ensnare my wife.

Vel. You have no right in her after your demise. Death extinguishes all property—*Quoad hanc*—It is a maxim in the law——

Sir Geo. A pox on your learning!—Well, but what is become of Tinsel?

Vel. He rushed out of the house, called for his horse, clapped spurs to his sides, and was out of sight in less time than I can tell ten.

Sir Geo. This is whimsical enough. My wife will have a quick succession of lovers in one day. Fantome has driven out Tinsel, and I shall drive out Fantome.

Vel. Even as one wedge driveth out another—He, he, he! You must pardon me for being jocular.

Sir Geo. Was there ever such a provoking blockhead? But he means me well——Well, I must have satisfaction of this traitor, Fantome, and cannot take a more proper one, than by turning him out of my house, in a manner that shall throw shame upon him, and make him ridiculous as long as he lives.—You must remember, Vellum, you have abundance of business upon your hands, and I have but just time to tell it you over. All I require of you is dispatch; therefore hear me.

Vel. There is nothing more requisite in business than dispatch.

Sir Geo. Then hear me.

Vel. It is, indeed, the life of business.

Sir Geo. Hear me then, I say.

Vel. And, as one hath rightly observed, the benefit that attends it is four-fold. First—

Sir Geo. There is no bearing this. Thou art going to describe dispatch, when thou shouldst be practising it.

Vel. But your ho—nour will not give me the hearing.

Sir Geo. Thou wilt not give me the hearing. [*Angrily.*

Vel. I am still.

Sir Geo. In the first place, you are to lay my wig, hat, and sword ready for me in the closet,

and one of my scarlet coats. You know how Abigail has described the ghost to you.

Vel. It shall be done.

Sir Geo. Then you must remember, whilst I am laying this ghost, you are to prepare my wife for the reception of her real husband. Tell her the whole story, and do it with all the art you are master of, that the surprise may not be too great for her.

Vel. It shall be done. But since her ho—nour has seen this apparition, she desires to see you once more before you encounter it.

Sir Geo. I shall expect her impatiently; for now I can talk to her without being interrupted by that impertinent rogue Tinsel.—I hope thou hast not told Abigail any thing of the secret.

Vel. Mrs Abigail is a woman: there are many reasons why she should not be acquainted with it; I shall only mention six.

Sir Geo. Hush, here she comes!——Oh my heart!

Enter Lady TRUMAN *and* ABIGAIL.

Sir Geo. [*Aside, while* VELLUM *talks in dumb shew to L.* TRU.] Oh, that lov'd woman! how I long to take her in my arms! If I find I am still dear to her memory, it will be a return to life indeed. But I must take care of indulging this tenderness, and put on a behaviour more suitable to my present character.

[*Walks at a distance, in a pensive posture, waving his wand.*

L. Tru. [*To* VELLUM.] This is surprising indeed! So all the servants tell me: they say he knows every thing that has happened in the family.

Ab. [*Aside.*] A parcel of credulous fools: they first tell him their secrets, and then wonder how he comes to know them.

[*Exit* VEL. *exchanging fond looks with* ABIGAIL.

L. Tru. Learned sir, may I have some conversation with you, before you begin your ceremonies?

Sir Geo. Speak—But hold—First let me feel your pulse.

L. Tru. What can you learn from that?

Sir Geo. I have already learned a secret from it that will astonish you.

L. Tru. Pray, what is it?

Sir Geo. You will have a husband within this half hour.

Ab. [*Aside.*] I am glad to hear that—He must mean Mr Fantome. I begin to think there's a good deal of truth in his art.

L. Tru. Alas! I fear you mean I shall see Sir George's apparition a second time.

Sir Geo. Have courage: you shall see the apparition no more. The husband I mention shall be as much alive as I am.

Ab. Mr Fantome, to be sure. [*Aside.*

L. Tru. Impossible: I loved my first too well.

Sir Geo. You could not love the first better than you will love the second.

Ab. [*Aside.*] I'll be hanged if my dear steward has not instructed him. He means Mr Fantome, to be sure. The thousand pounds are our own.

L. Tru. Alas, you did not know Sir George!

Sir Geo. As well as I do myself—I saw him with you in the red damask room, when he first made love to you: your mother left you together, under pretence of receiving a visit from Mrs Hawthorn, on her return from London.

L. Tru. This is astonishing!

Sir Geo. You were a great admirer of a single life for the first half hour; your refusals then grew still fainter and fainter. With what ecstacy did Sir George kiss your hand, when you told him you should always follow the advice of your mamma!

L. Tru. Every circumstance to a tittle!

Sir Geo. Then, lady, the wedding night!——I saw you in your white sattin night-gown. You would not come out of your dressing-room till Sir George took you out by force. He drew you gently by the hand—you struggled—but he was too strong for you—you blushed—he—

L. Tru. Oh, stop there! go no further.——He knows every thing. [*Aside.*

Ab. Truly, Mr Conjuror, I believe you have been a wag in your youth.

Sir Geo. Mrs Abigail, you know what your good word cost Sir George,—a purse of broad pieces, Mrs Abigail.

Ab. The devil's in him.—[*Aside.*]—Pray, sir, since you have told so far, you should tell my lady that I refused to take them.

Sir Geo. 'Tis true, child, he was forced to thrust them into your bosom.

Ab. This rogue will mention the thousand pounds, if I don't take care. [*Aside.*] Pray, sir, though you are a conjuror, methinks you need not be a blab.

L. Tru. Sir, since I have now no reason to doubt of your art, I must beseech you to treat this apparition gently. It has the resemblance of my deceased husband. If there be any undiscovered secret, any thing that troubles his rest, learn it of him.

Sir Geo. I must, to that end, be sincerely informed by you whether your heart be engaged to another.—Have not you received the addresses of many lovers since his death?

L. Tru. I have been obliged to receive more visits than have been agreeable.

Sir Geo. Was not Tinsel welcome?—I'm afraid to hear an answer to my own question. [*Aside.*

L. Tru. He was well recommended.

Sir Geo. Racks! [*Aside.*

L. Tru. Of a good family.

Sir Geo. Tortures! [*Aside.*

L. Tru. Heir to a considerable estate.

Sir Geo. Death! [*Aside.*] And you still love him?—I'm distracted! [*Aside.*

L. Tru. No, I despise him. I found he had a design upon my fortune, was base, profligate, cowardly, and every thing that could be expected from a man of the vilest principles.

Sir Geo. I'm recovered. [*Aside.*

Ab. Oh, madam, had you seen how like a scoundrel he looked, when he left your ladyship in a swoon!—Where have you left my lady? says

I. In an elbow-chair, child, says he. And where are you going? says I. To town, child, says he; for, to tell thee truly, child, says he, I don't care for living under the same roof with the devil, says he.

Sir Geo. Well, lady, I see nothing in all this that may hinder Sir George's spirit from being at rest.

L. Tru. If he knows any thing of what passes in my heart, he cannot but be satisfied of that fondness which I bear to his memory. My sorrow for him is always fresh when I think of him. He was the kindest, truest, tenderest—Tears will not let me go on.

Sir Geo. This quite overpowers me!—I shall discover myself before my time. [*Aside.*] Madam, you may now retire, and leave me to myself.

L. Tru. Success attend you.

Ab. I wish Mr Fantome gets well off from this old Don—I know he'll be with him immediately. [*Exeunt Lady* TRUMAN *and* ABIGAIL.

Sir Geo. My heart is now at ease!—She is the same dear woman I left her. Now for my revenge upon Fantome. I shall cut the ceremonies short—A few words will do his business. —Now, let me seat myself in form—A good easy chair for a conjuror this—Now for a few mathematical scratches—A good lucky scrawl that—Faith, I think it looks very astrological—These two or three magical pot-hooks about it make it a complete conjuror's scheme.—[*Drum beats.*] Ha, ha, ha! Sir, are you there?—Enter, drummer. —Now must I pore upon my paper.

Enter FANTOME, *beating his Drum.*

Pr'ythee, don't make a noise, I'm busy. [FANTOME *beats.*] A pretty march! Pr'ythee, beat that over again. [*He beats, and advances.*] [*Rising.*] Ha! you're very perfect in the step of a ghost: you stalk it majestically.——[FANTOME *advances.*] How the rogue stares! He acts it to admiration! I'll be hanged if he has not been practising this half hour in Mrs Abigail's wardrobe. [FANTOME *starts, gives a rap with his drum.*] Pr'ythee, don't play the fool. [FANTOME *beats.*] Nay, nay, enough of this, good Mr Fantome.

Fan. [*Aside.*] Death! I am discovered. This jade Abigail has betrayed me.

Sir Geo. Mr Fantome, upon the word of an astrologer, your thousand pound bribe will never gain my Lady Truman.

Fan. 'Tis plain; she has told him all. [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Let me advise you to make off as fast as you can, or I plainly perceive, by my art, Mr Ghost will have his bones broke.

Fan. [*To Sir* GEO.] Look ye, old gentleman, I perceive you have learned this secret from Mrs Abigail.

Sir Geo. I have learned it from my art.

Fan. Thy art! Pr'ythee, no more of that.—— Look ye, I know you are a cheat as much as I am; and if thou'lt keep my counsel, I'll give thee ten broad pieces.

Sir Geo. I am not mercenary. Young man, I scorn thy gold.

Fan. I'll make them up twenty.

Sir Geo. Avaunt! and that quickly, or I'll raise such an apparition as shall—

Fan. An apparition, old gentleman! You mistake your man: I'm not to be frighted with bugbears!

Sir Geo. Let me retire but for a few moments, and I will give thee such a proof of my art—

Fan. Why, if thou hast any hocus-pocus tricks to play, why canst thou not do them here?

Sir Geo. The raising of a spirit requires certain secret mysteries to be performed, and words to be muttered in private.

Fan. Well, if I see through your trick, will you promise to be my friend?

Sir Geo. I will.——Attend, and tremble! [*Exit.*

Fan. A very solemn old ass! but I smoke him —he has a mind to raise his price upon me.—I could not think this slut would have used me thus.—I begin to grow horribly tired of my drum: I wish I was well rid of it. However, I have got this by it, that it has driven off Tinsel for good and all: I sha'n't have the mortification to see my mistress carried off by such a rival. Well, whatever happens, I must stop this old fellow's mouth: I must not be sparing in hush-money.— But here he comes.

Enter Sir GEORGE *in his own Habit.*

Ha! What's that? Sir George Truman! This can be no counterfeit. His dress, his shape, his face, the very wound of which he died! Nay, then 'tis time to decamp! [*Runs off.*

Sir Geo. Ha, ha, ha! Fare you well, good Sir George.—The enemy has left me master of the field: here are the marks of my victory: This drum will I hang up in my great hall, as the trophy of the day.

Enter ABIGAIL.

Sir GEORGE *stands with his hand before his face, in a musing posture.*

Ab. Yonder he is. O' my conscience, he has driven off the conjuror.—Mr Fantome, Mr Fantome! I give you joy, I give you joy. What do you think of your thousand pounds now? Why does not the man speak?

[*Pulls him by the sleeve.*

Sir Geo. Ha! [*Taking his hand from his face.*

Ab. Oh, 'tis my master! [*Shrieks.*

[*Running away, he catches her.*

Sir Geo. Good Mrs Abigail, not so fast.

Ab. Are you alive, sir?——He has given my shoulder such a cursed tweak! They must be real fingers: I feel them, I'm sure.

Sir Geo. What dost thou think?

Ab. Think, sir! think!—Troth I don't know what to think!—Pray, sir, how—

Sir Geo. No questions, good Abigail: thy curiosity shall be satisfied in due time.—Where's your lady?

Ab. Oh, I'm so frighted—and so glad——

Sir Geo. Where's your lady, I ask you?

Ab. Marry, I don't know where I am myself—I cann't forbear weeping for joy.

Sir Geo. Your lady? I say, your lady?—I must bring you to yourself with one pinch more.

Ab. Oh!—she has been talking a good while with the steward.

Sir Geo. Then he has opened the whole story to her. I'm glad he has prepared her.—Oh, here she comes.

Enter Lady TRUMAN, *followed by* VELLUM.

L. Tru. Where is he? Let me fly into his arms! My life! my soul! my husband!

Sir Geo. Oh, let me catch thee to my heart, dearest of women!

L. Tru. Are you then still alive, and are you here? I can scarce believe my senses! Now am I happy indeed!

Sir Geo. My heart is too full to answer thee.

L. Tru. How could you be so cruel to defer giving me that joy which you knew I must receive from your presence? You have robbed my life of some hours of happiness that ought to have been in it.

Sir Geo. It was to make our happiness the more sincere and unmixed: there will be now no doubts to dash it. What has been the affliction of our lives has given a variety to them, and will hereafter supply us with a thousand materials to talk of.

L. Tru. I am now satisfied that it is not in the power of absence to lessen your love towards me

Sir Geo. And I am satisfied that it is not in the power of death to destroy that love which makes me the happiest of men.

L. Tru. Was ever woman so blessed! to find again the darling of her soul, when she thought him lost for ever! to enter into a kind of second marriage with the only man whom she was ever capable of loving!

Sir Geo. May it be as happy as our first; I desire no more! Believe me, my dear, I want words to express those transports of joy and tenderness which are every moment rising in my heart whilst I speak to thee.

Enter Servants.

But. Just as the steward told us, lads!—Look you there, if he ben't with my lady already?

Gard. He, he, he! what a joyful night will this be for madam.

Coach. As I was coming in at the gate, a strange gentleman whisked by me, but he took to his heels, and made away to the George. If I did not see master before me, I should have sworn it had been his honour!

Gard. Hast thou given orders for the bells to be set a-ringing?

Coach. Never trouble thy head about that; it is done.

Sir Geo. [*To Lady* TRU.] My dear, I long as much to tell you my whole story as you do to hear it. In the mean while, I am to look upon this as my wedding-day. I'll have nothing but the voice of mirth and feasting in my house. My poor neighbours and my servants shall rejoice with me: My hall shall be free to every one; and let my cellars be thrown open.

But. Ah, bless your honour, may you never die again!

Coach. The same good man that ever he was!

Gard. Whurra!

Sir Geo. Vellum, thou hast done me much service to-day. I know thou lovest Abigail; but she's disappointed in a fortune. I'll make it up to both of you: I'll give thee a thousand pounds with her. It is not fit there should be one sad heart in my house to-night.

L. Tru. What you do for Abigail, I know is meant as a compliment to me. This is a new instance of your love.

Ab. Mr Vellum, you are a well-spoken man: Pray do you thank my master and my lady.

Sir Geo. Vellum, I hope you are not displeased with the gift I make you?

Vel. The gift is two-fold:—I receive from you
A virtuous partner, and a portion too,
For which, in humble wise, I thank the donors;
And so we bid good-night to both your ho—
nours. [*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY LADY TRUMAN.

TO-NIGHT the poet's advocate I stand;
And he deserves the favour at my hand,
Who in my equipage, their cause debating,
Has plac'd two lovers, and a third in waiting:
If both the first should from their duty swerve;
There's one behind the wainscot in reserve.
In his next play, if I would take this trouble,
He promised me to make the number double.

In troth, 'twas spoke like an obliging creature,
For though 'tis simple, yet it shews good nature.
My help thus ask'd, I could not choose but grant it,
And really I thought the play would want it,
Void, as it is, of all the usual arts
To warm your fancies, and to steal your hearts:
No court-intrigue, nor city cuckoldom;
No song, no dance, no music—but a drum;
No smutty thought, in doubtful phrase express'd;
And, gentlemen, if so, pray where's the jest?
When we would raise your mirth, you hardly know
Whether, in strictness, you should laugh or no,
But turn upon the ladies in the pit,
And if they redden, you are sure 'tis wit.
Protect him then, ye fair ones; for the fair
Of all conditions are his equal care.
He draws a widow, who, of blameless carriage,
True to her jointure, hates a second marriage;
And, to improve a virtuous wife's delights,
Out of one man contrives two wedding-nights:
Nay, to oblige the sex in ev'ry state,
A nymph of five-and-forty finds her mate.
Too long has marriage, in this tasteless age,
With ill-bred raillery supply'd the stage:
No little scribbler is of wit so bare,
But has his fling at the poor wedded pair.
Our author deals not in conceits so stale;
For should th' examples of his play prevail,
No man need blush, though true to marriage-vows,
Nor be a jest, though he should love his spouse.
Thus has he done you British consorts right,
Whose husbands, should they pry like mine to-night,
Would never find you in your conduct slipping,
Though they turn'd conjurors to take you tripping.

THE

MISER.

BY

HENRY FIELDING.

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY A FRIEND.

Too long the slighted Comic Muse has mourn'd,
Her face quite alter'd and her art o'erturn'd;
That force of nature now no more she sees,
With which so well her Jonson knew to please;
No characters from nature now we trace;
All serve to empty books of common-place:
Our modern bards, who to assemblies stray,
Frequent the Park, the visit, or the play,
Regard not what fools do, but what wits say:
Just they retail each quibble to the town,
That surely must admire what is its own.
Thus, without characters from nature got,
Without a moral, or without a plot,
A dull collection of insipid jokes,
Some stole from conversation, some from books,
Provided lords and ladies give 'em vent,
We call high comedy, and seem content.
But, to regale with other sort of fare,
To-night the author treats you with Moliere;
Moliere! who Nature's inmost secrets knew,
Whose justest pen like Kneller's pencil drew;
In whose strong scenes all characters are shewn,
Not by low jests, but actions of their own.
Happy our English bard, if your applause
Grant he's not injured the French author's cause:
From that alone arises all his fear:—
He must be safe if he has saved Moliere.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

LOVEGOLD, *the Miser.*
FREDERICK, *his Son.*
CLERIMONT.
RAMILIE, *Servant to Frederick.*
Mr DECOY, *a Broker.*
Mr FURNISH, *an Upholsterer.*
Mr SPARKLE, *a Jeweller.*
Mr SATIN, *a Mercer,*
Mr LIST, *a Tailor.*
CHARLES BUBBLEBOY.
A Lawyer.
JAMES.

WOMEN.

HARRIET, *Lovegold's Daughter.*
Mrs WISELY.
MARIANA.
LAPPET, *Maid to Mariana.*
WHEEDLE.
Servants, &c.

SCENE,—*London.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—LOVEGOLD'S *House.*

Enter LAPPET *and* RAMILIE.

Lap. I'll hear no more. Perfidious fellow! Have I for thee slighted so many good matches; have I for thee turn'd off Sir Oliver's steward and my lord Landy's butler, and several others, thy betters, and all to be affronted in so public a manner?

Ram. Do but hear me, madam:

Lap. If thou wouldst have neglected me, was there nobody else to dance a minuet with but Mrs Susan Cross-stitch, whom you know to be my utter aversion?

Ram. Curse on all balls! Henceforth I shall hate the sound of a violin.

Lap. I have more reason, I am sure, after having been the jest of the whole company: What must they think of me, when they see you, after having countenanced your addresses in the eye of the world, take out another lady before me?

Ram. I'm sure the world must think worse of me, did they imagine, madam, I could prefer any other to you.

Lap. None of your wheedling, sir; that won't do. If ever you hope to speak to me more, let me see you affront the little minx in the next assembly you meet her.

Ram. I'll do it; and luckily, you know, we are to have a ball at my lord Landy's the first night he lies out of town, where I'll give your revenge ample satisfaction.

Lap. On that condition I pardon you this time; but if ever you do the like again——

Ram. May I be banish'd for ever from those dear eyes, and be turn'd out of the family while you live in it.

Enter WHEEDLE.

Wheed. Dear Mrs Lappet!

Lap. My dear! this is extremely kind.

Wheed. It is what all your acquaintance must do that expect to see you. It is in vain to hope for the favour of a visit.

Lap. Nay, dear creature! now you are barbarous. My young lady has staid at home so much, I have not had one moment to myself: The first time I had gone out, I am sure, madam, would have been to wait on Mrs Wheedle.

Wheed. My lady has staid at home too pretty much lately.—Oh, Mr Ramilie! are you confin'd too? Your master does not stay at home, I am sure: He can find the way to our house, tho' you cann't.

Ram. That is the only happiness, madam, I envy him: but, faith, I don't know how it is in this parliament time; one's whole days are so taken up in the Court of Requests, and one's evenings at quadrille, the deuce take me if I have seen one opera since I came to town. Oh! now I mention operas, if you have a mind to see Cato, I believe I can steal my master's silver ticket; for I know he is engag'd to-morrow with some gentlemen, who never leave their bottle for music.

Lap. Ah, the savages!

Wheed. No one can say that of you, Mr Ramilie; you prefer music to every thing——

Ram. But the ladies. [*Bell rings.*] So, there's my summons.

Lap. Well, but shall we never have a party o quadrille more?

Wheed. Oh, don't name it! I have work'd my eyes out since I saw you; for my lady has taken a whim of flourishing all her old cambric pinners and handkerchiefs: in short, my dear! no journeywoman sempstress is half so much a slave as I am.

Lap. Why do you stay with her?

Wheed. La, child! where can one better one's self? All the ladies of our acquaintance are just the same. Besides, there are some little things that make amends:—My lady has a noble train of admirers.

Ram. That, madam, is the only circumstance wherein she has the honour of resembling you. [*Bell rings louder.*] You hear, madam, I am obliged to leave you—[*Bell rings.*] So, so, so: Would the bell were in your guts. [*Exit* RAMILIE.

Lap. Oh, Wheedle! I am quite sick of this family: the old gentleman grows more covetous every day he lives. Every thing is under lock and key: I can scarce ask you to eat or drink.

Wheed. Thank you, my dear! but I have drank half-a-dozen dishes of chocolate already this morning.

Lap. Well, but, my dear, I have a whole budget of news to tell you: I have made some notable discoveries.

Wheed. Pray let us hear 'em. I have some secrets of our family too, which you shall know by and by.—What a pleasure there is in having a friend to tell these things to!

Lap. You know, my dear, last summer my young lady had the misfortune to be overset in a boat between Richmond and Twickenham, and that a certain young gentleman, plunging immediately into the water, sav'd her life, at the hazard of his own—Oh! I shall never forget the figure she made at her return home—so wet, so draggled!—Ha, ha, ha!

Wheed. Yes, my dear! I know how all your fine ladies look when they are never so little disordered—they have no need to be so vain of themselves.

Lap. You are no stranger to my master's way of rewarding people:—When the poor gentleman

brought miss home, my master meets 'em at the door, and, without asking any question, very civilly shuts it against him. Well, for a whole fortnight afterwards, I was continually entertained with the young spark's bravery, and gallantry, and generosity, and beauty.

Wheed. I can easily guess: I suppose she was rather warmed than cooled by the water. These mistresses of ours, for all their pride, are made of just the same flesh and blood as we are.

Lap. About a month ago, my young lady goes to the play in an undress, and takes me with her. We sat in Burton's box, where, as the devil would have it, whom should we meet with but this very gentleman! Her blushes soon discovered to me who he was. In short, the gentleman entertained her the whole play; and I much mistake if ever she was so agreeably entertained in her life. Well, as we were going out, a rude fellow thrusts his hand into my lady's bosom, upon which her champion fell upon him, and did so maul him——My lady fainted away in my arms; but as soon as she came to herself—had you seen how she looked on him! Ah, sir! says she, in a mighty pretty tone, sure you were born for my deliverance! He handed her into a hackney-coach, and set us down at home. From this moment letters began to fly on both sides.

Wheed. And you took care to see the post paid, I hope.

Lap. Never fear that.—And now, what do you think we have contrived amongst us? We have got this very gentleman into the house, in the quality of my master's clerk.

Wheed. Soh! here's fine billing and cooing I warrant: Miss is in a fine condition.

Lap. Her condition is pretty much as it was yet; how long it will continue so, I know not. I am making up my matters as fast as I can, for this house holds not me after the discovery.

Wheed. I think you have no great reason to lament the loss of a place where the master keeps his own keys.

Lap. The devil take the first inventor of locks, say I. But come, my dear! there is one key which I keep, and that I believe will furnish us with sweet-meats; so if you will walk in with me, I'll tell you a secret which concerns your family. It is in your power, perhaps, to be serviceable to me. I hope, my dear, you will keep these secrets safe; for one would not have it known that one publishes all the affairs of a family while one stays in it. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Garden.*

Enter CLERIMONT *and* HARRIET.

Cler. Why are you melancholy, my dear Harriet? Do you repent that promise of yours, which has made me the happiest of mankind?

Har. You little know my heart, if you can think it capable of repenting any thing I have done towards your happiness. If I am melancholy, it is that I have it not in my power to make you as happy as I would.

Cler. Thou art too bounteous: Every tender word from those dear lips lays obligations on me I never can repay: but if to love, to dote on you more than life itself; to watch your eyes, that I may obey your wishes before you speak them, can discharge me from any part of that vast debt I owe you, I will be punctual in the payment.

Har. It were ungenerous in me to doubt you; and when I think what you have done for me, believe me I must think the balance on your side.

Cler. Generous creature! and dost thou not for me hazard the eternal anger of your father, the reproaches of your family, the censures of the world, who always blame the conduct of the person who sacrifices interest to any consideration?

Har. As for the censures of the world, I despise them, while I do not deserve them: Folly is forwarder to censure wisdom than wisdom folly. I were weak indeed, not to embrace real happiness, because the world does not call it so.

Cler. But see, my dearest! your brother is come into the garden.

Har. Is it not safe, think you, to let him into our secret?

Cler. You know, by outwardly humouring your father, in railing against the extravagance of young men, I have brought him to look on me as his enemy: it will be first proper to set him right in that point. Besides, in managing the old gentleman I shall still be obliged to a behaviour which the impatience of his temper may not bear, therefore I think it not adviseable to trust him, at least yet.——He will observe us. Adieu, my heart's only joy! [*Exit.*

Har. Honest creature! What happiness may I propose in a life with such a husband? What is there in grandeur to recompence the loss of him? Parents choose as often ill for us as we do for ourselves: they are too apt to forget how seldom true happiness lives in a palace, or rides in a coach and six.

Enter FREDERICK.

Fred. Dear Harriet! good morrow: I am glad to find you alone, for I have an affair to impart to you that I am ready to burst with.

Har. You know, brother, I am a trusty confidant.

Fred. As ever wore petticoats; but this is an affair of such consequence——

Har. Or it were not worth your telling me.

Fred. Or your telling again. In short, you never could discover it; I could afford you ten years to guess it in. I am—you will laugh immoderately when you know it—I am—it is impossible to tell you:—In a word—I am in love!

Har. In love!

Fred. Violently—to distraction; so much in love, that without more hopes than I at present see any possibility of obtaining, I cannot live three days.

Har. And has this violent distemper, pray, come upon you of a sudden?

Fred. No, I have bred it a long time: it hath been growing these several weeks: I stifled it as long as I could, but it is now come to a crisis, and I must either have the woman, or you will have no brother.

Har. But who is this woman? for you have conceal'd it so well that I cann't even guess.

Fred. In the first place, she is a most intolerable coquette.

Har. That is a description I shall never find her out by, there are so many of her sisters: you might as well tell me the colour of her complexion

Fred. Secondly, she is almost eternally at cards.

Har. You must come to particulars: I shall never discover your mistress till you tell me more than that she is a woman, and lives in this town.

Fred. Her fortune is very small.

Har. I find you are enumerating her charms.

Fred. Oh! I have only shewn you the reverse; but were you to behold the medal on the right side, you would see beauty, wit, genteelness, politeness—in a word, you would see Mariana.

Har. Mariana! Ha, ha, ha! you have started a wild-goose chase indeed. But if you could ever prevail on her, you may depend on it it is an arrant impossibility to prevail on my father; and you may easily imagine what success a disinherited son may be likely to expect with a woman of her temper.

Fred. I know 'tis difficult, but nothing's impossible to love, at least, nothing's impossible to woman; and therefore if you and the ingenious Mrs Lappet will but lay your heads together in my favour, I shall be far from despairing; and in return, sister, for this kindness—

Har. And in return, brother, for this kindness, you may perhaps have it in your power to do me a favour of pretty much the same nature.

Love. [*Without.*] Rogue! villain!

Har. So! what's the matter now? what can have thrown my father into this passion?

Fred. The loss of an old slipper, I suppose, or something of equal consequence. Let us step aside into the next walk, and talk more of our affairs. [*Exeunt.*

Enter LOVEGOLD *and* RAMILIE.

Love. Answer me not, sirrah, but get you out of my house.

Ram. Sir, I am your son's servant, and not yours, sir; and I won't go out of the house, sir, unless I am turn'd out by my proper master, sir.

Love. Sirrah, I'll turn your master out after you, like an extravagant rascal as he is: he has no need of a servant while he is in my house; and here he dresses out a fellow at more expence than a prudent man might clothe a large family at. It's plain enough what use he keeps you for; but I will have no spy upon my affairs, no rascal continually prying into all my actions, devouring all I have, and hunting about in every corner, to see what he may steal.

Ram. Steal! a likely thing indeed, to steal from a man who locks up every thing he has, and stands sentry upon it day and night!

Love. I'm all over in a sweat lest this fellow should suspect something of my money. [*Aside.*] Hark'e, rascal, come hither: I would advise you not to run about the town, and tell every one you meet that I have money hid.

Ram. Why, have you any money hid, sir?

Love. No, sirrah, I don't say I have; but you may raise such a report nevertheless.

Ram. 'Tis equal to me whether you have money hid or no, since I cannot find it.

Love. D'ye mutter, sirrah? Get you out of my house, I say, get you out this instant.

Ram. Well, sir, I am going.

Love. Come back: let me desire you to carry nothing away with you.

Ram. What should I carry?

Love. That's what I would see. These boot-sleeves were certainly intended to be the receivers of stolen goods, and I wish the tailor had been hang'd who invented them. Turn your pockets inside out if you please; but you are too practised a rogue to put any thing there. These damn'd bags have had many a good thing in them, I warrant you.

Ram. Give me my bag, sir: I am in the most danger of being robbed.

Love. Come, come, be honest, and return what thou hast taken from me.

Ram. Ay, sir, that I could do with all my heart, for I have taken nothing from you but some boxes on the ear.

Love. And hast thou really stolen nothing?

Ram. No, really, sir.

Love. Then get out of my house while 'tis all well, and go to the devil.

Ram. Ay, any where from such an old covetous curmudgeon. [*Exit.*

Love. So, there's one plague gone. Now I will go pay a visit to the dear casket.

Enter FREDERICK *and* HARRIET.

In short, I must find some safer place to deposit those three thousand guineas in, which I received yesterday: three thousand guineas are a sum ——Oh, Heavens! I have betray'd myself! my passion has transported me to talk aloud, and I have been overheard.——How now! what's the matter?

Fred. The matter, sir!

Love. Yes, the matter, sir! I suppose you can repeat more of my words than these: I suppose you have overheard——

Fred. What, sir?

Love. That——

Fred. Sir!

Love. What I was just now saying.

Har. Pardon me, sir; we really did not.

Love. Well, I see you did overhear something, and so I will tell you the whole.—I was saying to myself, in this great scarcity of money, what a happiness it would be to have three thousand

guineas by one. I tell you this that you might not misunderstand me, and imagine that I said I had three thousand guineas.

Fred. We enter not into your affairs, sir.

Love. Ah, would I had those three thousand guineas!

Fred. In my opinion———

Love. It would make my affairs extremely easy.

Fred. Then it is very easily in your power to raise 'em, sir: that the whole world knows.

Love. I raise 'em! I raise three thousand guineas easily! My children are my greatest enemies, and will, by their way of talking, and by the extravagant expences they run into, be the occasion that, one of these days, somebody will cut my throat, imagining me to be made up of nothing but guineas.

Fred. What expence, sir, do I run into?

Love. How have you the assurance to ask me that, sir, when, if one was but to pick those fine feathers of yours off from head to foot, one might purchase a very comfortable annuity out of them? A fellow here with a very good fortune upon his back wonders that he is call'd extravagant! In short, sir, you must rob me to appear in this manner.

Fred. How sir! rob you?

Love. Ay, rob me, or how could you support this extravagance?

Fred. Alas, sir! there are fifty young fellows of my acquaintance that support greater extravagancies, and no one knows how. Ah, sir! there are ten thousand pretty ways of living in this town without robbing one's father.

Love. What necessity is there for all that lace on your coat? and all bought at the first hand too, I warrant you. If you will be fine, is there not such a place as Monmouth Street in this town, where a man may buy a suit for the third part of the sum which his tailor demands? And then periwigs! What need has a man of periwigs, when he may wear his own hair? I dare swear a good periwig cann't cost less than fifteen or twenty shillings.———Hey-day! what, are they making signs to one another which shall pick my pocket?

Har. My brother and I, sir, are disputing which shall speak to you first, for we have both an affair of consequence to mention to you.

Love. And I have an affair of consequence to mention to you both. Pray, sir, you who are a fine gentleman, and converse much amongst the ladies, what think you of a certain young lady called Mariana?

Fred. Mariana, sir!

Love. Ay, what do you think of her?

Fred. Think of her, sir!

Love. Why do you repeat my words?—Ay, what do you think of her?

Fred. Why, I think her the most charming woman in the world.

Love. Would she not be a desirable match?

Fred. So desirable, that, in my opinion, her husband will be the happiest of mankind.

Love. Does she not promise to make a good housewife?

Fred. Oh, the best housewife upon earth.

Love. Might not a husband, think ye, live very easy and happy with her?

Fred. Doubtless, sir.

Love. There is one thing I'm a little afraid of, that is, that she has not quite as much fortune as one might fairly expect.

Fred. Oh, sir! consider but her merit, and you may easily make an abatement in her fortune. For Heaven's sake, sir, don't let that prevent your design. Fortune is nothing in comparison with her beauty and merit.

Love. Pardon me there; however, there may be some matters found, perhaps, to make up some little deficiency; and if you would, to oblige your father, retrench your extravagancies on this occasion, perhaps the difference in some time might be made up.

Fred. My dearest father! I'll bid adieu to all extravagance for ever.

Love. Thou art a dutiful good boy; and since I find you have the same sentiments with me, provided she can but make out a pretty tolerable fortune, I am even resolved to marry her.

Fred. Ha! You resolved to marry Mariana?

Love. Ay, to marry Mariana.

Har. Who? you, you, you!

Love. Yes, I, I, I.

Fred. I beg you will pardon me, sir: a sudden dizziness has seized me, and I must beg leave to retire. [*Exit* FRED.

Love. This, daughter, is what I have resolved for myself: as for your brother, I have a certain widow in my eye for him; and you, my dear! shall marry our good neighbour Mr Spindle.

Har. I marry Mr Spindle.

Love. Yes; he is a prudent, wise man, not much above fifty, and has a great fortune in the funds.

Har. I thank you, my dear papa! but I had rather not marry, if you please. [*Courtesying.*

Love. [*Mimicking her courtesy.*] I thank you, my good daughter! but I had rather you should marry him, if you please.

Har. Pardon me, dear sir!

Love. Pardon me, dear madam!

Har. Not all the fathers upon earth shall force me to it.

Love. Did ever mortal hear a girl talk in this manner to her father!

Har. Did ever father attempt to marry his daughter after such a manner! In short, sir, I have ever been obedient to you; but as this affair concerns my happiness only, and not yours, I hope you will give me leave to consult my own inclination.

Love. I would not have you provoke me: I am resolved upon the match.

Enter CLERIMONT.

Cler. Some people, sir, upon justice business, desire to speak with your worship.

Love. I can attend to no business, this girl has

so perplexed me.——Hussy, you shall marry as I would have you, or—

Cler. Forgive my interposing. Dear sir, what's the matter? Madam, let me entreat you not to put your father into a passion.

Love. Clerimont, you are a prudent young fellow. Here's a baggage of a daughter who refuses the most advantageous match that ever was offered both to her and to me: a man of a vast estate offers to take her without a portion!

Cler. Without a portion! Consider, dear madam! Can you refuse a gentleman who offers to take you without a portion?

Love. Ay, consider what that saves your father.

Har. Yes, but I consider what I am to suffer.

Cler. That's true indeed; you will think on that, sir. Though money be the first thing to be considered in all the affairs of life, yet some little regard should be had in this case to inclination.

Love. Without a portion.

Cler. You are in the right, sir; that decides the thing at once: And yet I know there are people who, on this occasion, object against a disparity of age and temper, which too often make the married state utterly miserable.

Love. Without a portion.

Cler. Ah! there's no answering that——Who can oppose such a reason as that? And yet there are several parents who study the inclinations of their children more than any other thing, that would by no means sacrifice them to interest, and who esteem, as the very first article of marriage, that happy union of affections which is the foundation of every blessing attending on a married state—and who—

Love. Without a portion.

Cler. Very true; that stops your mouth at once——Without a portion! Where is the person who can find an argument against that?

Love. Ha! is not that the barking of a dog? Some villains are in search of my money.—Don't stir from hence:—I'll return in an instant.

[*Exit* LOVE.

Cler. My dearest Harriet! how shall I express the agony I am in on your account?

Har. Be not too much alarmed, since you may depend on my resolution. It may be in the power of Fortune to delay our happiness, but no power shall force me to destroy your hopes by any other match.

Cler. Thou kindest lovely creature!

Enter LOVEGOLD.

Love. Thank Heaven, it was nothing but my fear.

Cler. Yes, a daughter must obey her father: she is not to consider the shape, or the air, or the age of a husband; but when a man offers to take her without a portion, she is to have him, let him be what he will.

Love. Admirably well said, indeed!

Cler. Madam, I ask your pardon, if my love for yourself and family carries me a little too far.—Be under no concern; I dare swear I shall bring her to it. [*To* LOVEGOLD.

Love. Do, do. I'll go in and see what these people want with me. Give her a little more now while she's warm: you will be time enough to draw the warrant.

Cler. When a lover offers, madam, to take a daughter without a portion, one should inquire no further; every thing is contained in that one article; and without a portion supplies the want of beauty, youth, family, wisdom, honour, and honesty.

Love. Gloriously said: spoke like an oracle! [*Exit.*

Cler. So, once more we are alone together.—Believe me this is a most painful hypocrisy: it tortures me to oppose your opinion, though I am not in earnest, nor suspected by you of being so. Oh, Harriet! how is the noble passion of love abused by vulgar souls, who are incapable of tasting its delicacies! When love is great as mine,

None can its pleasures or its pains declare;
We can but feel how exquisite they are.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I—*Continues.*

Enter FREDERICK *and* RAMILIE.

Fred. What is the reason, sirrah, you have been out of the way, when I gave you orders to stay here?

Ram. Yes, sir, and here did I stay, according to your orders, till your good father turn'd me out; and it is, sir, at the extreme hazard of a cudgel that I return back again.

Fred. Well, sir, and what answer have you brought touching the money?

Ram. Ah, sir, it is a terrible thing to borrow money! A man must have dealt with the devil, to deal with a scrivener.

Fred. Then it won't do, I suppose.

Ram. Pardon me, sir. Mr Decoy the broker is a most industrious person: he says he has done every thing in his power to serve you, for he has taken a particular fancy to your honour.

Fred. So then I shall have the five hundred, shall I?

Ram. Yes, sir; but there are some trifling conditions which your honour must submit to before the affair can be finished.

Fred. Did he bring you to the speech of the person that is to lend the money?

Ram. Ah, sir! things are not managed in that manner: he takes more care to conceal himself than you do: There are greater mysteries in these matters than you imagine. Why, he would not so much as tell me the lender's name; and he is to bring him to-day to talk with you in some third person's house, to learn from your own mouth the particulars of your estate and family. I dare swear the very name of your father will make all things easy.

Fred. Chiefly the death of my mother, whose jointure no one can hinder me of.

Ram. Here, sir, I have brought the articles: Mr Decoy told me he took 'em from the mouth of the person himself. Your honour will find them extremely reasonable———the broker was forced to stickle hard to get such good ones. In the first place, the lender is to see all his securities, and the borrower must be of age, and heir-apparent to a large estate, without flaw in the title, and entirely free from all encumbrance; and, that the lender may run as little risk as possible, the borrower must ensure his life for the sum lent: if he be an officer in the army, he is to make over his whole pay for the payment of both principal and interest, which, that the lender may not burden his conscience with any scruples, is to be no more than thirty per cent.

Fred. Oh the conscientious rascal!

Ram. But as the said lender has not by him at present the sum demanded, and that to oblige the borrower he is himself forced to borrow of another, at the rate of four per cent., he thinks it but reasonable that the first borrower, over and above the thirty per cent. aforesaid, shall also pay this four per cent., since it is for his service only that this sum is borrowed.

Fred. Oh, the devil! what a Jew is here!

Ram. You know, sir, what you have to do—He cann't oblige you to these terms.

Fred. Nor can I oblige him to lend me the money without them; and you know that I must have it, let the conditions be what they will.

Ram. Ay, sir: Why, that was what I told him.

Fred. Did you so, rascal? No wonder he insists on such conditions, if you laid open my necessities to him.

Ram. Alas, sir, I only told it to the broker, who is your friend, and has your interest very much at heart.

Fred. Well, is this all, or are there any more reasonable articles?

Ram. Of the five hundred pounds required, the lender can pay down in cash no more than four hundred, and for the rest the borrower must take in goods, of which here follows the catalogue.

Fred. What, in the devil's name, is the meaning of all this?

Ram. Imprimis, one large yellow camblet bed, lined with satin, very little eaten by the moths, and wanting only one curtain; six stuffed chairs of the same, a little torn, and the frames worm-eaten, otherwise not in the least the worse for wearing; one large pier-glass, with only one crack in the middle; one suit of tapestry hangings, in which are curiously wrought the loves of Mars and Venus, Venus and Adonis, Cupid and Psyche, with many other amorous stories, which make the hangings very proper for a bed-chamber.

Fred. What the devil is here?

Ram. Item, one suit of drugget, with silver buttons, the buttons only the worse for wearing; *item,* two muskets, one of which only wants the lock; one large silver watch, with Tompion's name to it; one snuff-box, with a picture in it, bought at Mr Deard's—a proper present for a mistress; five pictures without frames, if not originals, all copies by good hands; and one fine frame without a picture.

Fred. Oons! what use have I for all this?

Ram. Several valuable books, amongst which are all the journals printed for these five years last past, handsomely bound and lettered——the whole works in divinity of———

Fred. Read no more! Confound the curs'd extortioner! I shall pay one hundred per cent.

Ram. Ah, sir! I wish your honour would consider of it in time.

Fred. I must have money. To what straits are we reduced by the curs'd avarice of fathers! Well may we wish them dead, when their death is the only introduction to our living.

Ram. Such a father as yours, sir, is enough to make one do something more than wish him dead. For my part, I have never had any inclinations towards hanging; and I thank Heaven I have lived to see whole sets of my companions swing out of the world, while I have had address enough to quit all manner of gallantries the moment I smelt the halter. I have always had an utter aversion to the smell of hemp; but this rogue of a father of yours, sir——Sir, I ask your pardon——has so provoked me, that I have often wished to rob him; and rob him I shall in the end, that's certain.

Fred. Give me that paper, that I may consider a little these moderate articles.

Enter LOVEGOLD *and* DECOY.

Decoy. In short, sir, he is a very extravagant young fellow, and so pressed by his necessities, that you may bring him to what terms you please.

Love. But do you think, Mr Decoy, there is no danger? Do you know the name, the family, and the estate of the borrower?

Decoy. No, I cannot give you any perfect information yet, for it was by the greatest accident in the world that he was recommended to me; but you will learn all these particulars from his own lips; and his man assured me you would make no difficulty the moment you knew the name of his father. All that I can tell you is, that his servant says the old gentleman is extremely rich: he called him a covetous old rascal.

Love. Ay, that is the name which these spendthrifts, and the rogues their servants, give to all

honest, prudent men, who know the world, and the value of their money.

Decoy. This young gentleman is an only son, and is so little afraid of any future competitors, that he offers to be bound, if you insist on it, that his father shall die within these eight months.

Love. Ay, there's something in that: I believe then I shall let him have the money.——Charity, Mr Decoy, charity obliges us to serve our neighbours, I say, when we are no losers by so doing.

Decoy. Very true indeed.

Ram. Hey-day! what can be the meaning of this? Our broker talking with the old gentleman!

Decoy. So, gentlemen! I see you are in great haste: But who told you, pray, that this was the lender?—I assure you, sir, I neither discovered your name nor your house: but, however, there is no great harm done: they are people of discretion, so you may freely transact the affair now.

Love. How!

Decoy. This, sir, is the gentleman that wants to borrow the five hundred pounds I mentioned to you.

Love. How, rascal! is it you that abandon yourself to these intolerable extravagancies?

Fred. I must even stand buff, and outface him. [*Aside.*]—And is it you, father, that disgrace yourself by these scandalous extortions?

[RAMILIE *and* DECOY *sneak off.*

Love. Is it you that would ruin yourself by taking up money at such an interest?

Fred. Is it you that would enrich yourself by lending at such interest?

Love. How dare you, after this, appear before my face?

Fred. How dare you, after this, appear before the face of the world?

Love. Get you out of my sight, villain! get out of my sight.

Fred. Sir, I go; but give me leave to say——

Love. I'll not hear a word: I'll prevent your attempting any thing of this nature for the future.——Get out of my sight, villain!——I am not sorry for this accident: it will make me henceforth keep a stricter eye over his actions.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in* LOVEGOLD'S *House.*

Enter HARRIET *and* MARIANA.

Mar. Nay, Harriet, you must excuse me, for of all people upon earth you are my greatest favourite: but I have had such an intolerable cold, child, that it is a miracle I have recovered; for, my dear, would you think I have had no less than three doctors?

Har. Nay, then it is a miracle you recovered, indeed.

Mar. Oh, child, doctors will never do me any harm, I never take any thing they prescribe: I don't know how it is, when one's ill one cann't help sending for them; and you know, my dear, my mamma loves physic better than she does any thing but cards.

Har. Were I to take as much of cards as you do, I don't know which I should nauseate most.

Mar. Oh, child, you are quite a tramontane: I must bring you to like dear spadille. I protest, Harriet, if you would take my advice in some things, you would be the most agreeable creature in the world.

Har. Nay, my dear! I am in a fair way of being obliged to obey your commands.

Mar. That would be the happiest thing in the world for you; and I dare swear you would like them extremely, for they would be exactly opposite to every command of your father's.

Har. By that, now, one would think you were married already.

Mar. Married, my dear!

Har. Oh, I can tell you of such a conquest! you will have such a lover within these four-and-twenty hours!

Mar. I am glad you have given me timely notice of it, that I may turn off somebody to make room for him; but I believe I have listed him already.——Oh, Harriet! I have been so plagued, so pestered, so fatigued, since I saw you, with that dear creature your brother—in short, child, he has made arrant downright love to me: if my heart had not been harder than adamant itself, I had been your sister by this time.

Har. And if your heart be not harder than adamant, you will be in a fair way of being my mother shortly, for my good father has this very day declared such a passion for you—

Mar. Your father!

Har. Ay, my dear! what say you to a comely old gentleman of not much above threescore, that loves you so violently? I dare swear he will be constant to you all his days.

Mar. Ha, ha, ha! I shall die. Ha, ha, ha! you extravagant creature! how could you throw away all this jest at once? it would have furnished a prudent person with an annuity of laughter for life. Oh! I am charmed with my conquest; I am quite in love with him already: I never had a lover yet above half his age.

Har. Lappet and I have laid a delightful plot, if you will but come into it, and counterfeit an affection for him.

Mar. Why, child, I have a real affection for him. Oh, methinks I see you on your knees already—Pray, mamma, please to give me your blessing. Oh, I see my loving bridegroom in his threefold nightcap, his flannel shirt: methinks I see him approach me with all the loving gravity of age; I hear him whisper charming sentences of morality in my ear, more instructive than all my grandmother e'er taught me. Oh! I smell him sweeter, oh! sweeter than even hartshorn itself! Ha, ha, ha! See, child, how beautiful a fond imagination can paint a lover. Would not any one think now we had been a happy couple together, Heaven knows how long?

Har. Well, you dear mad creature! but do

you think you can maintain any of this fondness to his face? for I know some women who speak very fondly of a husband to other people, but never say one civil thing to the man himself.

Mar. Oh, never fear it. One cann't indeed bring one's self to be civil to a young lover; but as for these old fellows, I think one may play as harmlessly with them as with one another. Young fellows are perfect bears, and must be kept at a distance; the old ones are mere lap-dogs, and when they have agreeable tricks with them, one is equally fond of both.

Har. Well, but now I hope you will give me leave to speak a word or two seriously in favour of my poor brother.

Mar. Oh, I shall hate you if you are serious. Oh! see what your wicked words have occasioned. I protest you are a conjuror, and certainly deal with the devil.

Enter FREDERICK.

Har. Oh, brother! I am glad you are come to plead your own cause: I have been your solicitor in your absence.

Fred. I am afraid, like other clients, I shall plead much worse for myself than my advocate has done.

Mar. Persons who have a bad cause should have very artful counsel.

Fred. When the judge is determined against us, all art will prove of no effect.

Mar. Why then, truly, sir, in so terrible a situation, I think the sooner you give up the cause the better.

Fred. No, madam, I am resolved to persevere; for when one's whole happiness is already at stake, I see nothing more can be hazarded in the pursuit. It might be perhaps a person's interest to give up a cause wherein part of his fortune was concerned, but when the dispute is about the whole, he can never lose by persevering.

Mar. Do you hear him, Harriet? I fancy this brother of yours would have made a most excellent lawyer. I protest, when he is my son-in-law, I'll send him to the Temple: though he begins a little late, yet diligence may bring him to be a great man.

Fred. I hope, madam, diligence may succeed in love as well as law: Sure Mariana is not a more crabbed study than Coke upon Lyttleton!

Mar. Oh, the wretch! he has quite suffocated me with his comparison: I must have a little air: Dear Harriet! let us walk in the garden.

Fred. I hope, madam, I have your leave to attend you?

Mar. My leave! No, indeed, you have no leave of mine; but if you will follow me, I know no way to hinder you. [*Exeunt.*

Har. Ah, brother, I wish you had no greater enemy in this affair than your mistress. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*A Garden.*

Enter RAMILIE *and* LAPPET.

Lap. This was indeed a most unlucky accident: however, I dare lay a wager I shall succeed better with him, and get some of those guineas you would have borrowed.

Ram. I am not, madam, now to learn Mrs Lappet's dexterity; but if you get any thing out of him, I shall think you a match for the devil. Sooner than to extract gold from him, I would engage to extract religion from a hypocrite, honesty from a lawyer, health from a physician, sincerity from a courtier, or modesty from a poet. I think, my dear, you have liv'd long enough in this house to know that gold is a dear commodity here.

Lap. Ah, but there are some certain services which will squeeze it out of the closest hands. There is one trade which, I thank Heaven, I'm no stranger to, wherein all men are dabblers; and he who will scarce afford himself either meat or clothes, will still pay for the commodities I deal in.

Ram. Your humble servant, madam. I find you don't know our good master yet. There is not a woman in the world who loves to hear her pretty self talk never so much, but you may easier shut her mouth than open his hands. As for thanks, praises, and promises, no courtier upon earth is more liberal of them; but for money, the devil a penny. There's nothing so dry as his caresses: and there is no husband who hates the word *wife* half so much as he does the word *give*. Instead of saying I give you a good-morrow, he always says I lend you a good morning.

Lap. Ah, sir! let me alone to drain a man: I have the secret to open his heart and his purse too.

Ram. I defy you to drain the man we talk of of his money; he loves that more than any thing you can procure him in exchange: The very sight of a dun throws him into convulsions; 'tis touching him in the only sensible part; 'tis piercing his heart, tearing out his vitals, to ask him for a farthing: but here he is, and if you get a shilling out of him, I'll marry you without any other fortune. [*Exit.*

Enter LOVEGOLD.

Love. All's well hitherto: my dear money is safe.—Is it you, Lappet?

Lap. I should rather ask if it be you, sir? Why, you look so young and vigorous——

Love. Do I, do I!

Lap. Why, you grow younger and younger every day, sir: you never look'd half so young in your life, sir, as you do now. Why, sir, I know fifty young fellows of five-and-twenty that are older than you are.

Love. That may be, that may be, Lappet, considering the lives they lead; and yet I am a good ten years above fifty.

Lap. Well, and what's ten years above fifty? 'tis the very flower of a man's age. Why, sir, you are now in the very prime of your life.

Love. Very true, that's very true, as to understanding; but I am afraid, could I take off twenty years, it would do me no harm with the ladies, Lappet.—How goes on our affair with Mariana? Have you mentioned any thing about what her

mother can give her? for now-a-days nobody marries a woman unless she brings something with her besides her petticoat

Lap. Sir! Why, sir, this young lady will be worth to you as good a thousand pounds a-year as ever was told.

Love. How! a thousand pounds a-year!

Lap. Yes, sir. There's, in the first place, the article of a table: she has a very little stomach; she does not eat above an ounce in a fortnight; and then, as to the quality of what she eats, you'll have no need of a French cook upon her account: as for sweet-meats, she mortally hates them; so there is the article of deserts wiped off all at once—you'll have no need of a confectioner, who would be eternally bringing in bills for preserves, conserves, biscuits, comfits, and jellies, of which half-a-dozen ladies would swallow you ten pounds worth at a meal: this, I think, we may very moderately reckon at two hundred pounds a-year at least. *Item*, for clothes: she has been bred up in such a plainness in them, that should we allow but for three birth-night suits a-year saved, which are the least a town lady would expect, there go a good two hundred pounds a-year more. For jewels, (of which she hates the very sight,) the yearly interest of what you must lay out in them would amount to one hundred pounds. Lastly, she has an utter detestation for play, at which I have known several moderate ladies lose a good two thousand pounds a-year; now let us take only the fourth part of that, which amounts to five hundred, to which if we add two hundred pounds on the table account, two hundred pounds in clothes, and one hundred pounds in jewels, there is, sir, your thousand pounds a-year in hard money.

Love. Ay, ay, these are pretty things, it must be confess'd, very pretty things; but there's nothing real in 'em.

Lap. How, sir! is it not something real to bring you in marriage a vast store of sobriety, the inheritance of a great love for simplicity of dress, and a vast acquired fund of hatred for play?

Love. This is downright raillery, Lappet, to make me up a fortune out of the expences she won't put me to. I assure you, madam, I shall give no acquittance for what I have not received: in short, Lappet, I must touch, touch, touch something real.

Lap. Never fear: you shall touch something real. I have heard them talk of a certain country where she has a very pretty freehold, which shall be put into your hands.

Love. Nay, if it were a copyhold I should be glad to touch it; but there is another thing that disturbs me. You know this girl is young, and young people generally love one another's company: it would ill agree with a person of my temper to keep an assembly for all the young rakes and flaunting girls in town.

Lap. Ah, sir, how little do you know of her! This is another particularity that I had to tell you of: She has a most terrible aversion for all young people, and loves none but persons of your years I would advise you above all things to take care not to appear too young; she insists on sixty at least: Why, she broke off a match t'other day because her lover was but fifty, and pretended to sign the marriage articles without spectacles.

Love. This humour is a little strange, methinks.

Lap. She carries it farther, sir, than can be imagined. She has in her chamber several pictures, but what do you think they are? None of your smoke-faced young fellows; your Adonises, your Cephaluses, your Parises, and your Apollos: No, sir; you see nothing there but your handsome figures of Saturn, King Priam, old Nestor, and good father Anchises upon his son's shoulders.

Love. Admirable! This is more than I could have hoped. To say the truth, had I been a woman, I should never have loved young fellows.

Lap. I believe you. Pretty sort of stuff indeed to be in love with, young fellows! Pretty masters indeed, with their fine complexions and their fine feathers! Now, I should be glad to taste the savour that is in any of them

[*Here* LAPPET *introduces a song.*

Love. And do you really think me pretty tolerable?

Lap. Tolerable! You are ravishing! If your picture were drawn by a good hand, sir, it would be invaluable! Turn about a little, if you please. There, what can be more charming! Let me see you walk. There's a person for you! tall, straight, free, and degagee! Why, sir, you have no fault about you.

Love. Not many; hem, hem; not many, I thank Heaven; only a few rheumatic pains now and then, and a small catarrh, that seizes me sometimes.

Lap. Ah, sir, that's nothing: your catarrh sits very well upon you, and you cough with a very good grace.

Love. But tell me, what does Mariana say of my person?

Lap. She has a particular pleasure in talking of it; and I assure you, sir, I have not been backward on all such occasions to blazon forth your merit, and to make her sensible how advantageous a match you will be to her.

Love. You did very well, and I am obliged to you.

Lap. But, sir, I have a small favour to ask of you.—I have a lawsuit depending, which I am on the very brink of losing for want of a little money; [*He looks gravely*] and you could easily procure my success, if you had the least friendship for me. You cann't imagine, sir, the pleasure she takes in talking of you. [*He looks pleased.*]—Ah! how you will delight her! how your venerable mien will charm her! she will never be able to withstand you.—But indeed, sir, this lawsuit will be of a terrible consequence to me. [*He looks grave again.*] I am ruined if I lose it, which a very small matter would prevent. Ah, sir, had you but seen the raptures with

which she has heard me talk of you! [*He resumes his gaiety;*] how pleasure sparkled in her eyes at the recital of your good qualities! In short, to discover a secret to you which I promised to conceal, I have worked up her imagination till she is downright impatient of having the match concluded.

Love. Lappet, you have acted a very friendly part; and I own that I have all the obligations in the world to you.

Lap. I beg you would give me this little assistance, sir. [*He looks serious.*] It will set me on my feet, and I shall be eternally obliged to you.

Love. Farewell; I'll go and finish my dispatches.

Lap. I assure you, sir, you could never assist me in a greater necessity.

Love. I must go give some orders about a particular affair.

Lap. I would not importune you, sir, if I was not forced by the last extremity.

Love. I expect the tailor about turning my coat.—Don't you think this coat will look well enough turn'd, with new buttons, for a wedding-suit?

Lap. For pity's sake, sir, don't refuse me this small favour: I shall be undone, indeed, sir:—If it were but so small a matter as ten pounds, sir.

Love. I think I hear the tailor's voice.

Lap. If it were but five pounds, sir; but three pounds, sir: nay, sir, a single guinea would be of service for a day or two.

[*As he offers to go out on either side she intercepts him.*

Love. I must go: I cann't stay. Hark, there somebody calls me.—I'm very much obliged to you; indeed I am very much obliged to you.

[*Exit.*

Lap. Go to the gallows, to the devil, like a covetous, good-for-nothing villain, as you are! Ramilie is in the right: However, I shall not quit the affair; for though I get nothing out of him, I am sure of my reward from the other side.

Fools only to one party will confide,
Good politicians will both parties guide,
And if one falls, they're fee'd on t'other side.

[*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I—*Continues.*

Enter HARRIET, FREDERICK, *and* CLERIMONT.

Fred. I think, sir, you have given my sister a very substantial proof of your affection. I am sorry you could have had such a suspicion of me as to imagine I could have been an enemy to one who has approved himself a gentleman and a lover.

Cler. If any thing, sir, could add to my misfortunes, it would be to be thus obliged without having any prospect of repaying the obligation.

Fred. Every word you speak is a farther conviction to me that you are what you have declared yourself; for there is something in a generous education which it is impossible for persons who want that happiness to counterfeit; therefore henceforth I beg you to believe me sincerely your friend.

Har. Come, come, pray a truce with your compliments, for I hear my father's cough coming this way.

Enter LOVEGOLD.

Love. So, so, this is just as I would have it.—Let me tell you, children, this is a prudent young man, and you cannot converse too much with him: he will teach you, sir, for all you hold your head so high, better sense than to borrow money at fifty per cent: And you, madam, I dare say he will infuse good things into you too, if you will but hearken to him.

Fred. While you live, sir, we shall want no other instructor.

Love. Come hither, Harriet: you know to-night I have invited our friend and neighbour Mr Spindle. Now I intend to take this opportunity of saving the expence of another entertainment, by inviting Mariana and her mother; for I observe that, take what care one will, there is always more victuals provided on these occasions than is ate; and an additional guest makes no additional expence.

Cler. Very true, sir; besides, though they were to rise hungry, no one ever calls for more at another person's table.

Love. Right, honest Clerimont, and to rise with an appetite is one of the wholesomest things in the world. Harriet, I would have you go immediately and carry the invitation: you may walk thither, and they will bring you back in a coach.

Har. I shall obey you, sir.

Love. Go; that's my good girl. And you, sir, I desire would behave yourself civilly at supper.

Fred. Why should you suspect me, sir?

Love. I know, sir, with what eyes such sparks as you look upon a mother-in-law; but if you hope for my forgiveness of your late exploit, I would advise you to behave to her in the most affectionate manner imaginable.

Fred. I cannot promise, sir, to be overjoy'd at her being my mother-in-law; but this I will promise you, I will be as civil to her as you could wish: I will behold her with as much affection as you can desire me: that is an article upon which you may be sure of a most punctual obedience.

Love. That I think is the least I can expect.

Fred. Sir, you shall have no reason to complain.

Enter JAMES.

James. Did you send for me, sir?

Love. Where have you been, for I have wanted you above an hour?

James. Whom, sir, did you want? your coachman or your cook? for I am both one and t'other.

Love. I want my cook, sir.

James. I thought indeed it was not your coachman; for you have had no great occasion for him since your last pair of geldings were starved—but your cook, sir, shall wait on you in an instant.

[*Puts off his coachman's great coat, and appears as a cook.*

Love. What's the meaning of this folly?

James. I am ready for your commands, sir.

Love. I am engaged this evening to give a supper.

James. A supper, sir! I have not heard the word this half year: I have indeed now and then heard of such a thing as a dinner; but for a supper, I have not dress'd one so long, that I am afraid my hand is out.

Love. Leave off your saucy jesting, sirrah, and see that you provide me a good supper.

James. That may be done, sir, with a good deal of money.

Love. What, is the devil in you? always money. Can you say nothing else but money, money, money? All my servants, my children, my relations, can pronounce no other word than money.

Cler. I never heard so ridiculous an answer.—Here's a miracle for you indeed, to make a good supper with a good deal of money! is there any thing so easy? Is there any one who cann't do it? Would a man shew himself to be a good cook, he must make a good supper out of a little money.

James. I wish you would be so good, sir, as to shew us that art, and take my office of cook upon yourself.

Love. Peace, sirrah, and tell me what we can have.

James. There's a gentleman, sir, who can furnish you out a good supper with a little money.

Love. Answer me yourself.

James. Why, sir, how many will there be at table?

Love. About eight or ten; but I will have a supper dress'd but for eight; for if there be enough for eight there is enough for ten.

James. Suppose, sir, you have at one end of the table a good handsome soup; at the other a fine Westphalia ham and chickens; on one side a fillet of veal roasted, and on the other a turkey, or rather a bustard, which I believe may be bought for a guinea, or thereabouts.

Love. What! is the fellow providing an entertainment for my lord-mayor and the court of aldermen?

James. Then, sir, for the second course, a leash of pheasants, a leash of fat poulards, half-a-dozen partridges, one dozen of quails, two dozen of ortolans, three dozen——

Love. [*Putting his hand before* JAMES's *mouth.*] Ah, villain! you are eating up all I am worth.

James. Then a ragout——

Love. [*Stopping his mouth again.*] Hold your extravagant tongue, sirrah.

Cler. Have you a mind to burst them all? Has my master invited people to cram 'em to death; or do you think his friends have a mind to eat him up at one supper? Such servants as you, Mr James, should be often reminded of that excellent saying of a very wise man,—we must eat to live, not live to eat.

Love. Excellently well said, indeed! It is the finest sentence I ever heard in my life:—We must live to eat, and not eat to—No, that is not it:—How did you say?

Cler. That we must eat to live, and not live to eat.

Love. Extremely fine! Pray write them out for me, for I'm resolv'd to have them done in letters of gold, or black and white rather, over my hall chimney.

James. You have no need to do any more, sir: people talk enough of you already.

Love. Pray, sir, what do people say of me?

James. Ah, sir! if I could but be assur'd that you would not be angry with me—

Love. Not at all: so far from it, you will very much oblige me; for I am always very glad to hear what the world says of me.

James. Well, sir, then, since you will have it, I will tell you freely that they make a jest of you every where, nay, of your very servants, upon your account. They make ten thousand stories of you. One says that you have always a quarrel ready with your servants at quarter-day, or when they leave you, in order to find an excuse to give them nothing: another says that you were taken one night stealing your own oats from your own horses, for which your coachman very handsomely belaboured your back:—In a word, sir, one can go no where where you are not the by-word: you are the laughing-stock of all the world: and you are never mentioned but by the names of covetous, scraping, stingy———

Love. Impertinent, impudent rascal! Beat him for me, Clerimont.

Cler. Are you not asham'd, Mr James, to give your master this language?

James. What's that to you, sir?—I fancy this fellow's a coward: if he be, I will handle him.

Cler. It does not become a servant to use such language to his master.

James. Who taught you, sir, what becomes? If you trouble your head with my business I shall thresh your jacket for you. If I once take a stick in hand I shall teach you to hold your tongue for the future, I believe. If you offer to say another word to me I'll break your head for you.

[*Drives* CLERIMONT *to the farther end of the stage.*

Cler. How, rascal! break my head!

James. I did not say I'd break your head.

[CLERIMONT *drives him back again.*

Cler. Do you know, sirrah, that I shall break yours for this impudence?

James. I hope not, sir: I give you no offence, sir.

Cler. That I shall shew you the difference between us?

James. Ha, ha, ha! Sir, I was but in jest.

Cler. Then I shall warn you to forbear these jests for the future. [*Kicks him off the stage.*

James. Nay, sir, cann't you take a jest? Why, I was but in jest all the while.

Love. How happy am I in such a clerk!

Cler. You may leave the ordering of the supper to me, sir: I will take care of that.

Love. Do so: see and provide something to cloy their stomachs: let there be two great dishes of soup-meagre; a good large suet-pudding; some dainty fat pork pie or pasty; a fine small breast of mutton, not too fat; a sallad, and a dish of artichokes, which will make plenty and variety enough.

Cler. I shall take a particular care, sir, to provide every thing to your satisfaction.

Love. But be sure there be plenty of soup, be sure of that.—This is a most excellent young fellow!—But now will I go pay a visit to my money. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Street.*

RAMILIE *and* LAPPET *meeting.*

Ram. Well, madam, what success? Have I been a false prophet, and have you come at the old hunks's purse; or have I spoke like an oracle, and he is as close-fisted as usual?

Lap. Never was a person of my function so used: All my rhetoric availed nothing. While I was talking to him about the lady, he smiled and was pleased, but the moment I mentioned money to him, his countenance changed, and he understood not one word that I said. But now, Ramilie, what do you think this affair is that I am transacting?

Ram. Nay, Mrs Lappet, now you are putting too severe a task upon me. How is it possible, in the vast variety of affairs which you honour with taking into your hands, that I should be able to guess which is so happy to employ your immediate thoughts?

Lap. Let me tell you then, sweet sir! that I am transacting an affair between your master's mistress and his father.

Ram. What affair, pr'ythee?

Lap. What should it be but the old one,—matrimony? In short, your master and his father are rivals.

Ram. I am glad on't, and I wish the old gentleman success with all my heart.

Lap. How! are you your master's enemy?

Ram. No, madam, I am so much his friend that I had rather he should lose his mistress than his humble servant, which must be the case; for I am determined against a married family. I will never be servant to any man who is not his own master.

Lap. Why, truly, when one considers the case thoroughly, I must be of opinion that it would be more your master's interest to be this lady's son-in-law than her husband; for, in the first place, she has but little fortune; and if she were once married to his son, I dare swear the old gentleman would never forgive the disappointment of his love.

Ram. And is the old gentleman in love?

Lap. Oh, profoundly! delightfully! Oh that you had but seen him as I have; with his feet tottering, his eyes watering, his teeth chattering! his old trunk was shaken with a fit of love, just as if it had been a fit of an ague!

Ram. He will have more cold fits than hot, I believe.

Lap. Is it not more advantageous for him to have a mother-in-law that should open his father's heart to him, than a wife that would shut it against him? Besides, it will be better for us all; for if the husband were as covetous as the devil, he could not stop the hands of an extravagant wife: she will always have it in her power to reward them who keep her secrets; and when the husband is old enough to be the wife's grandfather, she has always secrets that are worth concealing, take my word for it; so, faith, I will e'en set about that in earnest which I have hitherto intended only as a jest.

Ram But do you think you can prevail with her? Will she not be apt to think she loses that by the exchange which he cannot make her amends for?

Lap. Ah, Ramilie! the difficulty is not so great to persuade a woman to follow her interest: We generally have that more at heart than you men imagine; besides, we are extremely apt to listen to one another; and whether you would lead a woman to ruin, or preserve her from it, the surest way of doing either is by one of her own sex: We are generally decoyed into the net by birds of our own feather.

Ram. Well, if you do succeed in your undertaking, you will allow this, I hope,—that I first put it into your head.

Lap. Yes, it is true you did mention it first; but I thought of it first, I am sure: I must have thought of it: but I will not lose a moment's time; for, notwithstanding all I have said, young fellows are devils: besides, this has a most plausible tongue, and should he get access to Mariana, may do in a few minutes what I shall never be able to undo as long as I live. [*Exit.*

Ram. There goes the glory of all chamber-maids. The jade has art, but is quite overshadow'd by her vanity. She will get the better of every one but the person who will condescend to praise her; for though she be a most mercenary devil, she will swallow no bribe half so eagerly as flattery. The same pride which warms her fancy serves to cool her appetites, and therefore, though she have neither virtue nor beauty, her vanity gives her both. And this is my mistress, with a pox to her! Pray, what am I in love with? But that

is a question so few lovers can answer, that I shall content myself with thinking I am in love with *le je ne scai quoi* :—Match her who can.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—LOVEGOLD'S *House.*

Enter LOVEGOLD, FREDERICK, HARRIET, *Mrs* WISELY, *and* MARIANA.

Love. You see, madam, what it is to marry extremely young: Here are a couple of tall branches for you, almost the age of man and woman: but ill weeds grow apace.

Mrs Wise. When children come to their age, Mr Lovegold, they are no longer any trouble to their parents. What I have always dreaded was to have married into a family where there were small children.

Love. Pray give me leave, young lady: I have been told you have no great aversion to spectacles: it is not that your charms do not sufficiently strike the naked eye, or that they want addition; but it is with glasses we look at the stars; and I'll maintain you are a star of beauty, that is, the finest, brightest, and most glorious of all stars.

Mar. Harriet, I shall certainly burst.——Oh! nauseous, filthy fellow!

Love. What does she say to you, Harriet?

Har. She says, sir, if she were a star, you should be sure of her kindest influence.

Love. How can I return this great honour you do me?

Mar. Ah! what an animal! what a wretch!

Love. How vastly am I obliged to you for these kind sentiments!

Mar. I shall never be able to hold it out, unless you keep him at a greater distance.

Love. [*Listening.*] I shall make them both keep their distance, madam. Hark'e, you Mr Spendall, why don't you come and make this lady some acknowledgment for the great honour she does your father?

Fred. My father has indeed, madam, much reason to be vain of his choice: You will be doubtless a very great honour to our family: notwithstanding which, I cannot dissemble my real sentiments so far as to counterfeit any joy I shall have in the name of son-in-law; nor can I help saying, that, if it were in my power, I believe I should make no scruple of preventing the match.

Mar. I believe it indeed: were they to ask the leave of their children, few parents would marry twice.

Love. Why, you ill-bred blockhead, is that the compliment you make your mother-in-law?

Fred. Well, sir, since you will have me talk in another style—Suffer me, madam, to put myself in the place of my father; and believe me when I swear to you I never saw any one half so charming; that I can imagine no happiness equal to that of pleasing you; that to be called your husband would be to my ears a title more blest, more glorious than that of the greatest of princes. The possession of you is the most valuable gift in the power of Fortune: that is the lovely mark to which all my ambition tends; there is nothing which I am not capable of undertaking to attain so great a blessing; all difficulties, when you are the prize in pursuit——

Love. Hold, hold, sir! softly, if you please!

Fred. I am only saying a few civil things, sir, for you to this lady.

Love. Your humble servant, sir! I have a tongue to say civil things with myself: I have no need of such an interpreter as you are, sweet sir!

Mar. If your father could not speak better for himself than his son can for him, I am afraid he would meet with little success.

Love. I don't ask you, ladies, to drink any wine before supper, lest it should spoil your stomachs.

Fred. I have taken the liberty to order some sweet-meats, sir, and tokay, in the next room:—I hope the ladies will excuse what is wanting.

Mrs Wise. There was no necessity for such a collation.

Fred. [*To* MARIANA.] Did you ever see, madam, so fine a brilliant as that on my father's finger?

Mar. It seems indeed to be a very fine one.

Fred. You cannot judge of it, madam, unless you were to see it nearer. If you will give me leave, sir. [*Takes it off from his father's finger, and gives it to* MARIANA.] There is no seeing a jewel while it is on the finger.

Mrs Wise. Mar. It is really a prodigious fine one.

Fred. [*Preventing* MARIANA, *who is going to return it.*] No, madam, it is already in the best hands. My father, madam, intends it as a present to you, therefore I hope you will accept it.

Love. Present! I!——

Fred. Is it not, sir, your request to this lady that she should wear this bauble for your sake?

Love. [*To his Son.*] Is the devil in you?

Fred. He makes signs to me that I would entreat you to accept it.

Mar. I shall not, upon my word.

Fred. He will not receive it again.

Love. I shall run stark staring mad!

Mar. I must insist on returning it.

Fred. It would be cruel in you to refuse him: let me entreat you, madam, not to shock my poor father to such a degree.

Mrs Wise. It is ill-breeding, child, to refuse so often.

Love. Oh, that the devil would but fly away with this fellow!

Fred. See, madam, what agonies he is in lest you should return it.——It is not my fault, dear sir! I do all I can to prevail with her—but she is obstinate.——For pity's sake, madam, keep it.

Love. [*To his Son.*] Infernal villain!

Fred. My father will never forgive me, madam, unless I succeed:—On my knees I entreat you.

Love. The cut-throat!

Mrs Wise. Daughter, I protest you make me ashamed of you. Come, come, put up the ring, since Mr Lovegold is so uneasy about it.

Mar. Your commands, madam, always determine me, and I shall refuse no longer.

Love. I shall be undone! I wish I was buried while I have one farthing left.

Enter JAMES.

James. Sir, there is a man at the door who desires to speak with you.

Love. Tell him I am busy——bid him come another time—bid him leave his business with you.

James. Must he leave the money he has brought with me, sir? [*Exit* JAMES.

Love. No, no, stay—tell him I come this instant.—I ask pardon, ladies; I'll wait on you again immediately. [*Exit.*

Fred. Will you please, ladies, to walk into the next room, and taste the collation I was mentioning?

Mar. I have ate too much fruit already this afternoon.

Mrs Wise. Really, sir, this is an unnecessary trouble; but since the tokay is provided, I will taste one glass.

Har. I'll wait on you, madam.

[*Exeunt Mrs* WISELY *and* HARRIET.

Mar. That is a mighty pretty picture over the door, Harriet: Is it a family-piece, my dear? I think it has a great deal of you in it: Are you not generally thought very like it?——Hey-day! where is my mamma and your sister gone?

Fred. They thought, madam, we might have some business together, and so were willing to leave us alone.

Mar. Did they so? But as we happen to have no business together, we may as well follow them.

Fred. When a lover has no other obstacles to surmount but those his mistress throws in his way, she is in the right not to become too easy a conquest; but were you as kind as I could wish, my father would still prove a sufficient bar to our happiness; therefore it is a double cruelty in you.

Mar. Our happiness! How came your happiness and mine to depend so on one another, pray, when that of the mother and son-in-law are usually so very opposite?

Fred. This is keeping up the play behind the curtain. Your kindness to him comes from the same spring as your cruelty to me.

Mar. Modest enough! Then I suppose you think both fictitious.

Fred. Faith, to be sincere, I do. Without arrogance, I think I have nothing in me so detestable as should make you deaf to all I say, or blind to all I suffer. This I am certain, there is nothing in him so charming as to captivate a woman of your sense in a moment.

Mar. You are mistaken, sir: money, money, the most charming of all things; money, which will say more in one moment than the most eloquent lover can in years. Perhaps you will say a man is not young; I answer he is rich: he is not genteel, handsome, witty, brave, good-humoured; but he is rich, rich, rich, rich, rich——that one word contradicts every thing you can say against him: and if you were to praise a person for a whole hour, and end with,—But he is poor, you overthrow all that you have said; for it has long been an established maxim, that he who is rich can have no vice, and he that is poor can have no virtue.

Fred. These principles are foreign to the real sentiments of Mariana's heart. I vow, did you but know how ill a counterfeit you are, how awkwardly ill nature sits upon you, you'd never wear it. There is not one so abandoned but that she can affect what is amiable better than you can what is odious. Nature has painted in you the complexion of virtue in such lively colours, that nothing but what is lovely can suit you, or appear your own.

Enter HARRIET.

Har. I left your mamma, Mariana, with Mr Clerimont, who is shewing her some pictures in the gallery.—Well, have you told him?

Mar. Told him what?

Har. Why, what you told me this afternoon,—that you loved him.

Mar. I tell you I loved him!—Oh, barbarous falsehood!

Fred. Did you? could you say so? Oh, repeat it to my face, and make me bless'd to that degree!

Har. Repeat it to him, cann't you? How can you be so ill natured to conceal any thing from another which would make him happy to know?

Mar. The lie would choke me, were I to say so.

Har. Indeed, my dear, you have said you hated him so often, that you need not fear that. But if she will not discover it to yourself, take my word for it, brother, she is your own without any possibility of losing: she is full as fond of you as you are of her. I hate this peevish, foolish coyness in women, who will suffer a worthy lover to languish and despair, when they need only put themselves to the pain of telling truth to make him easy.

Mar. Give me leave to tell you, Miss Harriet, this is a treatment I did not expect from you, especially in your own house, madam. I did not imagine I was invited hither to be betrayed, and that you had entered into a plot with your brother against my reputation.

Har. We form a plot against your reputation! I wish you could see, my dear, how prettily these airs become you—take my word for it, you would have no reason to be in love with your fancy.

Mar. I should indeed have no reason to be in love with my fancy, if it were fixed where you have insinuated it to be placed.

Har. If you have any reason, madam, to be ashamed of your choice, it is from denying it. My brother is every way worthy of you, madam; and give me leave to tell you, if I can prevent it, you shall not render him as ridiculous to the town as you have some other of your admirers.

Fred. Dear Harriet! carry it no farther: you will ruin me for ever with her.

Har. Away! You do not know the sex: Her vanity will make you play the fool till she despises you, and then contempt will destroy her affection for you——It is a part she has often played.

Mar. I am obliged to you, however, madam, for the lesson you have given me, how far I may depend on a woman's friendship: it will be my own fault if I ever am deceived hereafter.

Har. My friendship, madam, naturally cools when I discover its object less worthy than I imagined her.—I can never have any violent esteem for one who would make herself unhappy to make the person who dotes on her more so: The ridiculous custom of the world is a poor excuse for such a behaviour: and, in my opinion, the coquette, who sacrifices the ease and reputation of as many as she is able to an ill-natured vanity, is a more odious, a more pernicious creature, than the wretch whom fondness betrays to make her lover happy at the expence of her own reputation.

Enter Mrs WISELY *and* CLERIMONT.

Mrs Wise. Upon my word, sir, you have a most excellent taste for pictures.

Mar. I can bear this no longer.—If you had been base enough to have given up all friendship and honour, good-breeding should have restrained you from using me after this inhuman, cruel, barbarous manner.

Mrs Wise. Bless me, child! what's the matter?

Har. Let me entreat you, Mariana, not to expose yourself: you have nothing to complain of on his side, and therefore pray let the whole be a secret.

Mar. A secret! No, madam: the whole world shall know how I have been treated. I thank Heaven I have it in my power to be revenged on you; and if I am not reveng'd on you——

Fred. See, sister, was I not in the right? Did I not tell you you would ruin me? and now you have done it.

Har. Courage! all will go well yet: You must not be frightened at a few storms: these are only blasts that carry a lover to his harbour.

Enter LOVEGOLD.

Love. I ask your pardon:—I have dispatched my business with all possible haste.

Mrs Wise. I did not expect, Mr Lovegold, when we were invited hither, that your children intended to affront us.

Love. Has any one affronted you, madam?

Mrs Wise. Your children, sir, have used my poor girl so ill, that they have brought tears into her eyes. I can assure you we are not used to be treated in this manner. My daughter is of as good a family——

Love. Out of my sight, audacious, vile wretches! and let me never see you again.

Fred. Sir, I——

Love. I won't hear a word, and I wish I may never hear you more. Was ever such impudence! to dare, after what I have told you———

Har. Come, brother, perhaps I may give you some comfort.

Fred. I fear you have destroyed it for ever.

[*Exeunt* FREDERICK *and* HARRIET.

Love. How shall I make you amends for the rudeness you have suffered? Poor pretty creature! had they stolen my purse I would almost as soon have pardoned them.

Mrs Wise. The age is come to a fine pass indeed, if children are to controul the wills of their parents. If I would have consented to a second match, I would have been glad to see a child of mine oppose it!

Love. Let us be married immediately, my dear! and if, after that, they ever dare to offend you, they shall stay no longer under my roof.

Mrs Wise. Look'e, Mariana, I know your consent will appear a little sudden, and not altogether conform to those nice rules of decorum of which I have been all my life so strict an observer; but this is so prudent a match, that the world will be apt to give you a dispensation. When women seem too forward to run away with idle young fellows, the world is, as it ought to be, very severe on them; but when they only consult their interest in their consent, though it be never so quickly given, we say, La! who suspected it? It was mighty privately carried on!

Mar. I resign myself entirely over to your will, madam, and am at your disposal.

Mrs Wise. Mr Lovegold, my daughter is a little shy on this occasion: you know your courtship has not been of any long date; but she has considered your great merit, and I believe I may venture to give you her consent.

Love. And shall I! Hey! I begin to find myself the happiest man upon earth! 'Od, madam, you shall be a grandmother within these ten months! —I am a very young fellow.

Mar. If you were five years younger, I should utterly detest you.

Love. The very creature she was described to be! No one, sure, ever so luckily found a mass of treasure as I have. My pretty sweet! if you will walk a few minutes in the garden, I will wait on you: I must give some necessary orders to my clerk.

Mrs Wise. We shall expect you with impatience.

[*Exeunt* MARIANA *and Mrs* WISELY.

Love. Clerimont, come hither. You see the disorder my house is like to be in this evening. I must trust every thing to your care. See that matters be managed with as small expence as possible. My extravagant son has sent for fruit, sweet-meats, and tokay. Take care what is not eat or drank be returned to the trades-people. If you can save a bottle of the wine, let that be sent back too; and put up what is left, if part of a bottle, in a pint: that I will keep for my own drinking when I am sick. Be sure that the servants of my guests be not asked to come farther than the hall, for fear some of mine should ask them to eat. I trust every thing to you.

Cler. I shall take all the care possible, sir: But

there is one thing in this entertainment of yours which gives me inexpressible pain.

Love. What is that, pr'ythee?

Cler. That is, the cause of it. Give me leave, sir, to be free on this occasion. I am sorry a man of your years and prudence should be prevailed on to so indiscreet an action as I fear this marriage will be called.

Love. I know she has not quite so great a fortune as I might expect.

Cler. Has she any fortune, sir?

Love. Oh, yes, yes: I have been very well assured that her mother is in very good circumstances, and you know she is her only daughter: Besides, she has several qualities which will save a fortune; and a penny saved is a penny got. Since I find I have great occasion for a wife, I might have searched all over this town and not have got one cheaper.

Cler. Sure you are in a dream, sir:—She save a fortune!

Love. In the article of a table, at least two hundred pounds a-year.

Cler. Sure, sir, you do not know——

Love. In clothes two hundred more.

Cler. There is not, sir, in the whole town——

Love. In jewels one hundred; play five hundred: these have been all proved to me; besides all that her mother is worth. In short, I have made a very prudent choice.

Cler. Do but hear me, sir.

Love. Take a particular care of the family, my good boy. Pray, let there be nothing wasted. [*Exit* LOVE.

Cler. How vainly do we spend our breath, while passion shuts the ears of those we talk to! I thought it impossible for any thing to have surmounted his avarice; but I find there is one little passion which reigns triumphant in every mind it creeps into; and, whether a man be covetous, proud, or cowardly, it is in the power of woman to make him liberal, humble, and brave. Sure this young lady will not let her fury carry her into the arms of a wretch she despises: but as she is a coquette, there is no answering for any of her actions. I will hasten to acquaint Frederick with what I have heard. Poor man! how little satisfaction he finds in his mistress, compared to what I meet in Harriet! Love to him is misery, to me perfect happiness. Women are always one or the other: they are never indifferent.

Whoever takes for better and for worse,
Meets with the greatest blessing, or the greatest curse. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Hall in* LOVEGOLD'S *House.*

Enter FREDERICK *and* RAMILIE.

Fred. How! Lappet my enemy! and can she attempt to forward Mariana's marriage with my father?

Ram. Sir, upon my honour, it is true: she told it me in the highest confidence; a trust, sir, which nothing but the inviolable friendship I have for you could have prevailed with me to have broken.

Fred. Sir, I am your most humble servant: I am infinitely obliged to your friendship.

Ram. Oh, sir, but really I did withstand pretty considerable offers; for, would you think it, sir?—the jade had the impudence to attempt to engage me too in the affair. I believe, sir, you would have been pleased to have heard the answer I gave her:—Madam, says I, do you think, if I had no more honour, I should have no greater regard to my interest? It is my interest, madam, says I, to be honest; for my master is a man of that generosity, that liberality, that bounty, that I am sure he will never suffer any servant of his to be a loser by being true to him. No, no, says I, let him alone for rewarding a servant, when he is but once assured of his fidelity.

Fred. No demands now, Ramilie: I shall find a time to reward you.

Ram. That was what I told her, sir. Do you think, says I, that this old rascal, (I ask your pardon, sir,) that this hunks, my master's father, will live for ever? And then, says I, do you think my master will not remember his old friends?

Fred. Well, but, dear sir, let us have no more of your rhetoric.—Go and fetch Lappet hither: I'll try if I cann't bring her over.

Ram. Bring her over! A fig for her, sir! I have a plot worth fifty of yours. I'll blow her up with your father: I'll make him believe just the contrary of every word she has told him.

Fred. Can you do that?

Ram. Never fear it, sir: I warrant my lies keep even pace with hers. But, sir, I have another plot:—I don't question but, before you sleep, I shall put you in possession of some thousands of your father's money.

Fred. He has done all in his power to provoke me to it; but I'm afraid that will be carrying the jest too far.

Ram. Sir, I will undertake to make it out that robbing him is a downright meritorious act. Besides, sir, if you have any qualms of conscience, you may return it him again: your having possession of it will bring him to any terms.

Fred. Well, well, I believe there is little danger of thy stealing any thing from him; so about the first affair: it is that only which causes my present pain.

Ram. Fear nothing, sir, whilst Ramilie is your friend. [*Exit.*

Enter CLERIMONT.

Fred. If impudence can give a title to success, I am sure thou hast a good one.

Cler. Oh, Frederick! I have been looking you all over the house. I have news for you which will give me pain to discover, though it is necessary you should know it. In short, Mariana has determined to marry your father this evening.

Fred. How! Oh, Clerimont! is it possible?—Cursed be the politics of my sister; she is the innocent occasion of this. And can Mariana, from a pique to her, throw herself away? Dear Clerimont! give me some advice; think on some method by which I may prevent, at least, this match; for that moment which gives her to my father will strike a thousand daggers in my heart.

Cler. Would I could advise you!—But here comes one who is more likely to invent some means for your deliverance.

Fred. Ha! Lappet.

Enter LAPPET.

Lap. Hey-day! Mr Frederick, you stand with your arms across, and look as melancholy as if there were a funeral going on in the house instead of a wedding.

Fred. This wedding, madam, will prove the occasion of my funeral: I am obliged to you for being instrumental to it.

Lap. Why, truly, if you consider the case rightly, I think you are: it will be much more to your interest to———

Fred. Mistress, undo immediately what you have done: prevent this match, which you have forwarded, or by all the devils which inhabit that heart of yours——

Lap. For Heaven's sake, sir! you do not intend to kill me?

Fred. What could drive your villainy to attempt to rob me of the woman I dote on more than life? What could urge thee, when I trusted thee with my passion, when I have paid the most extravagant usury for money to bribe thee to be my friend, what could sway thee to betray me?

Lap. As I hope to be saved, sir, whatever I have done was intended for your service.

Fred. It is in vain to deny it: I know thou hast used thy utmost art to persuade my father into this match.

Lap. If I did, sir, it was all with a view towards your interest If I have done any thing to prevent your having her, it was because I thought you would do better without her.

Fred. Wouldst thou, to save my life, tear out my heart? and dost thou, like an impudent inquisitor, whilst thou art destroying me, assert it is for my own sake?

Lap. Be but appeas'd, sir, and let me recover out of this terrible fright you have put me into, and I will engage to make you easy yet.

Cler. Dear Frederick, adjourn your anger for a while at least: I am sure Mrs Lappet is not your enemy in heart; and whatever she has done, if it has not been for your sake, this I dare confidently affirm,—it has been for her own: and I have so good an opinion of her, that the moment you shew her it will be more her interest to serve you than to oppose you, you may be secure of her friendship.

Fred. But has she not already carried it beyond retrieval?

Lap. Alas, sir! I never did any thing yet so effectually but that I have been capable of undoing it; nor have I ever said any thing so positively but that I have been able as positively to unsay it again. As for truth, I have neglected it so long, that I often forget which side of the question it is of: besides, I look on it to be so very insignificant towards success, that I am indifferent whether it is for me or against me.

Fred. Let me entreat you, dear madam, to lose no time in informing us of your many excellent qualities; but consider how very precious our time is, since the marriage is intended this very evening.

Lap. That cannot be.

Cler. My own ears were witnesses to her consent.

Lap. That indeed may be——but for the marriage, it cannot be, nor it shall not be.

Fred. How! how will you prevent it?

Lap. By an infallible rule I have.—But, sir, Mr Clerimont was mentioning a certain little word called interest just now. I should not repeat it to you, sir, but that really one goes about a thing with so much better a will, and one has so much better luck in it too, when one has got some little matter by it.

Fred. Here, take all the money I have in my pocket, and on my marriage with Mariana thou shalt have fifty more.

Lap. That is enough, sir:—If they were half married already, I would unmarry them again. I am impatient till I am about it.—Oh, there is nothing like gold to quicken a woman's capacity!

[*Exit.*

Fred. Dost thou think I may place any confidence in what this woman says?

Cler. Faith, I think so. I have told you how dexterously she managed my affairs. I have seen such proofs of her capacity, that I am much easier on your account than I was.

Fred. My own heart is something lighter too:—Oh, Clerimont! how dearly do we buy all the joys which we receive from women!

Cler. A coquette's lover generally pays very severely indeed: his game is sure to lead him a long chase; and if he catches her at last, she is hardly worth carrying home.—You will excuse me.

Fred. It does not affect me; for what appears a coquette in Mariana is rather the effect of sprightliness and youth, than any fixed habit of mind: she has good sense and good nature at the bottom.

Cler. If she has good nature, it is at the bottom indeed, for I think she has never discovered any to you.

Fred. Women of her beauty and merit have

such a variety of admirers, that they are shocked to think of giving up all the rest by fixing on one. Besides, so many pretty gentlemen are continually attending them, and whispering soft things in their ears, who think all their services well repaid with a courtesy or a smile, that they are startled, and think a lover a most unreasonable creature, who can imagine he merits their whole person.

Cler. They are of all people my aversion; they are a sort of spaniels, who, though they have no chance of running down the hare themselves, often spoil the chase. I have known one of these fellows pursue half the fine women in town without any other design than of enjoying them all in the arms of a strumpet. It is pleasant enough to see them watching the eyes of a woman of quality half an hour, to get an opportunity of making a bow to her.

Fred. Which she often returns with a smile, or some more extraordinary mark of affection, from a charitable design of giving pain to her real admirer, who, though he cann't be jealous of the animal, is concern'd to see her condescend to take notice of him.

Enter HARRIET.

Har. I suppose, brother, you have heard of my good father's economy, that he has resolved to join two entertainments in one, and prevent giving an extraordinary wedding-supper.

Fred. Yes, I have heard it, and I hope have taken measures to prevent it.

Har. Why, did you believe it, then?

Fred. I think I had no longer room to doubt.

Har. I would not believe it, if I were to see them in bed together.

Fred. Heaven forbid it!

Har. So say I too; Heaven forbid I should have such a mother-in-law! but I think if she were wedded into any other family, you would have no reason to lament the loss of so constant a mistress.

Fred. Dear Harriet! indulge my weakness.

Har. I will indulge your weakness with all my heart—but the men ought not; for they are such lovers as you who spoil the women.—Come, you will bring Mr Clerimont into my apartment, if I'll give you a dish of tea, and you shall have some *sal volatile* in it, though you have no real cause for any depression of your spirits, for I dare swear your mistress is very safe; and I am sure if she were to be lost, in the manner you apprehend, she would be the best loss you ever had in your life.

Cler. Oh, Frederick! if your mistress were but equal to your sister, you might well be called the happiest of mankind. [*Exeunt.*

Enter MARIANA *and* LAPPET.

Lap. Ha, ha, ha! and so you have persuaded the old lady that you really intend to have him?

Mar. I tell you I do really intend to have him.

Lap. Have him! ha, ha, ha! for what do you intend to have him?

Mar. Have I not told you already, that I will marry him?

Lap. Indeed you will not.

Mar. How, Mrs Impertinence, has your mistress told you so? and did she send you hither to persuade me against the match?

Lap. What should you marry him for? as for his riches, you might as well think of going hungry to a fine entertainment, where you were sure of not being suffered to eat: the very income of your own fortune will be more than he will allow you. Adieu fine clothes, operas, plays, assemblies; adieu dear quadrille—And to what have you sacrificed all these?—not to a husband—for, whatever you make of him, you will never make a husband of him, I'm sure.

Mar. This is a liberty, madam, I shall not allow you; if you intend to stay in this house, you must leave off these pretty airs you have lately given yourself.—Remember you are a servant here, and not the mistress, as you have been suffered to affect.

Lap. You may lay aside your airs too, good madam, if you come to that! for I shall not desire to stay in this house when you are the mistress of it.

Mar. It will be prudent in you not to put on your usual insolence to me; for if you do, your master shall punish you for it.

Lap. I have one more comfort, he will not be able to punish me half so much as he will you; the worst he can do to me is to turn me out of the house—but you he can keep in it. Wife to an old fellow! faugh!

Mar. If Miss Harriet sent you on this errand, you may return, and tell her her wit is shallower than I imagined it—and, since she has no more experience, I believe I shall send my daughter-in-law to school again. [*Exit.*

Lap. Hum! you will have a schoolmaster at home. I begin to doubt whether this sweet-temper'd creature will not marry in spite at last. I have one project more to prevent her, and that I will about instantly. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The Garden.*

Enter LOVEGOLD *and Mrs* WISELY.

Love. I cannot be easy; I must settle something upon her.

Mrs Wise. Believe me, Mr Lovegold, it is unnecessary; when you die, you will leave your wife very well provided for.

Love. Indeed I have known several law-suits happen on these accounts; and sometimes the whole has been thrown away in disputing to which party it belonged. I shall not sleep in my grave while a set of villainous lawyers are dividing the little money I have among them.

Mrs Wise. I know this old fool is fond enough now to come to any terms; but it is ill trusting him: violent passions can never last long at his years. [*Aside.*]

Love. What are you considering?

Mrs Wise. Mr Lovegold, I am sure, knows the world too well to have the worse opinion of any woman from her prudence; therefore I must tell you, this delay of the match does not at all please me: it seems to argue your inclination abated, and so it is better to let the treaty end here. My daughter has a very good offer now, which were she to refuse on your account, she would make a very ridiculous figure in the world after you had left her.

Love. Alas, madam! I love her better than any thing almost upon the face of the earth: this delay is to secure her a good jointure: I am not worth the money the world says; I am not indeed.

Mrs Wise. Well, sir, then there can be no harm, for the satisfaction both of her mind and mine, in your signing a small contract, which can be prepared immediately.

Love. What signifies signing, madam?

Mrs Wise. I see, sir, you don't care for it, so there is no harm done: and really this other is so very advantageous an offer, that I don't know whether I shall not be blamed for refusing him on any account.

Love. Nay, but be not in haste; what would you have me sign?

Mrs Wise. Only to perform your promise of marriage.

Love. Well, well, let your lawyer draw it up then, and mine shall look it over.

Mrs Wise. I believe my lawyer is in the house; I'll go to him, and get it done instantly, and then we will give this gentleman a final answer. I assure you he is a very advantageous offer.

[*Exit.*

Love. As I intend to marry this girl, there can be no harm in signing the contract: her lawyer draws it, so I shall be at no expence, for I can get mine to look it over for nothing. I should have done very wisely indeed to have entitled her to a third of my fortune, whereas I will not make her jointure above a tenth! I protest it is with some difficulty that I have prevailed with myself to put off the match: I am more in love, I find, than I suspected.

Enter LAPPET.

Lap. Oh, unhappy miserable creature that I am! what shall I do? whither shall I go?

Love. What's the matter, Lappet?

Lap. To have been innocently assisting in betraying so good a man! so good a master! so good a friend!

Love. Lappet, I say!

Lap. I shall never forgive myself; I shall never outlive it; I shall never eat, drink, sleep——

[*Runs against him.*

Love. One would think you were walking in your sleep now. What can be the meaning of this?

Lap. Oh, sir!—you are undone, sir! and I am undone!

Love. How! what! has any one robbed me? have I lost any thing?

Lap. No, sir; but you have got something.

Love. What? what?

Lap. A wife, sir.

Love. No, I have not yet——but why——

Lap. How, sir! are you not married?

Love. No.

Lap. That is the happiest word I ever heard come out of your mouth.

Love. I have, for some particular reasons, put off the match for a few days.

Lap. Yes, sir; and for some particular reasons you shall put off the match for a few years.

Love. What do you say?

Lap. Oh, sir! this affair has almost determined me never to engage in matrimonial matters again. I have been finely deceived in this lady! I told you, sir, she had an estate in a certain country; but I find it is all a cheat, sir; the devil of any estate has she!

Love. How! not any estate at all! how can she live then?

Lap. Nay, sir, Heaven knows how half the people in this town live.

Love. However, it is an excellent good quality in a woman to be able to live without an estate. She that can make something out of nothing, will make a little go a great way. I am sorry she has no fortune; but, considering all her saving qualities, Lappet——

Lap. All an imposition, sir; she is the most extravagant wretch upon earth.

Love. How! how! extravagant?

Lap. I tell you, sir, she is downright extravagance itself.

Love. Can it be possible, after what you told me?

Lap. Alas, sir! that was only a cloak thrown over her real inclinations.

Love. How was it possible for you to be deceived in her?

Lap. Alas, sir! she would have deceived any one upon earth, even you yourself: for, sir, during a whole fortnight, since you have been in love with her, she has made it her whole business to conceal her extravagance, and appear thrifty.

Love. That is a good sign though, Lappet, let me tell you, that is a good sign: right habits, as well as wrong, are got by affecting them; and she who could be thrifty a whole fortnight, gives lively hopes that she may be brought to be so as long as she lives.

Lap. She loves play to distraction; it is the only visible way she has of a living.

Love. She must win then, Lappet; and play, when people play the best of the game, is no such very bad thing. Besides, as she plays only to support herself, when she can be supported without it, she may leave it off.

Lap. To support her extravagance, in dress particularly; why, don't you see, sir, she is dress'd out to-day like a princess?

Love. It may be an effect of prudence in a young woman to dress in order to get a husband; and as that is apparently her motive, when she is married that motive ceases: and, to say the

truth, she is in discourse a very prudent young woman.

Lap. Think of her extravagance.

Love. A woman of the greatest modesty.

Lap. And extravagance.

Love. She has really a very fine set of teeth.

Lap. She will have all the teeth out of your head.

Love. I never saw finer eyes.

Lap. She will eat you out of house and home.

Love. Charming hair.

Lap. She will ruin you.

Love. Sweet kissing lips, swelling breasts, and the finest shape that ever was embraced.

[*Catching* LAPPET *in his arms.*

Lap. Oh, sir! I am not the lady—Was ever such an old goat! ——Well, sir, I see you are determined on the match, and so I desire you would pay me my wages. I cannot bear to see the ruin of a family, in which I have lived so long, that I have contracted as great a friendship for it as if it were my own; I cann't bear to see waste, riot, and extravagance; to see all the wealth a poor, honest, industrious, gentleman has been raising all his lifetime, squandered away in a year or two, in feasts, balls, music. cards, clothes, jewels——It would break my heart to see my poor old master eat out by a set of singers, fiddlers, milliners, mantua-makers, mercers, toymen, jewellers, fops, cheats, rakes——to see his guineas fly about like dust, all his ready money paid in one morning to one tradesman, his whole stock in the funds spent in one half year, all his land swallowed down in another, all his old gold, nay, the very plate he has had in his family time out of mind, which has descended from father to son ever since the flood, to see even that disposed of. What will they have next, I wonder, when they have had all that he is worth in the world, and left the poor old man without any thing to furnish his old age with the necessaries of life?—Will they be contented then? or will they tear out his bowels, and eat them too! [*Both burst into tears.*] The laws are cruel to put it in the power of a wife to ruin her husband in this manner—And will any one tell me, that such a woman as this is handsome?—What are a pair of shining eyes, when they must be bought with the loss of all one's shining old gold?

Love. Oh, my poor old gold!

Lap. Perhaps she has a fine set of teeth.

Love. My poor plate, that I have hoarded with so much care!

Lap. Or I'll grant she may have a most beautiful shape.

Love. My dear lands and tenements!

Lap. What are the roses on her cheeks, or lilies in her neck?

Love. My poor India bonds, bearing at least three and a half per cent.!

Lap. A fine excuse, indeed, when a man is ruined by his wife, to tell us he has married a beauty.

Enter Lawyer.

Law. Sir, the contract is ready; my client has sent for the counsel on the other side, and he is now below examining it.

Love. Get you out of my doors, you villain! you and your client too; I'll contract you with a pox!

Law. Hey-day! sure you are *non compos mentis.*

Love. No, sirrah; I had like to have been *non compos mentis*, but I have had the good luck to escape it. Go and tell your client I have discovered her: bid her take her advantageous offer, for I shall sign no contracts.

Law. This is the strangest thing I have met with in my whole course of practice! [*Exit.*

Love. I am very much obliged to you, Lappet; indeed I am very much obliged to you.

Lap. I am sure, sir, I have a very great satisfaction in serving you, and I hope you will consider of that little affair that I mentioned to you to-day about my law-suit.

Love. I am very much obliged to you.

Lap. I hope, sir, you won't suffer me to be ruined when I have preserved you from it.

Love. Hey! [*Appearing deaf.*

Lap. You know, sir, that in Westminster-hall money and right are always on the same side.

Love. Ay, so they are; very true, so they are; and therefore no man can take too much care of his money.

Lap. The smallest matter of money, sir, would do me an infinite service.

Love. Hey! what?

Lap. A small matter of money, sir, would do me a great kindness.

Love. Oho! I have a very great kindness for you; indeed I have a very great kindness for you.

Lap. Pox take your kindness!—I'm only losing time! there's nothing to be got out of him; so I'll even to Frederick, and see what the report of my success will do there. Ah, would I were married to thee myself! [*Exit.*

Love. What a prodigious escape have I had! I cannot look at the precipice without being giddy.

Enter RAMILIE.

Love. Who is that? Oh, is it you, sirrah? how dare you enter within these walls?

Ram. Truly, sir, I can scarcely reconcile it to myself. I think, after what has happened, you have no great title to my friendship: but I don't know how it is, sir, there is something or other about you which strangely engages my affections, and which, together with the friendship I have for your son, won't let me suffer you to be imposed upon; and to prevent that, sir, is the whole and sole occasion of my coming within your doors. Did not a certain lady, sir, called Mrs Lappet, depart from you just now?

Love. What if she did, sirrah?

Ram. Has she not, sir, been talking to you about a young lady whose name is Mariana?

Love. Well, and what then?

Ram. Why then, sir, every single syllable she has told you has been neither more nor less than a most confounded lie, as is indeed every word she says; for I don't believe, upon a modest calculation, she has told six truths since she has been in the house. She is made up of lies; her father was an attorney, and her mother was chamber-maid to a maid of honour: the first word she spoke was a lie, and so will be the last. I know she has pretended a great affection for you, that's one lie, and every thing she has said of Mariana is another.

Love. How! how! are you sure of this?

Ram. Why, sir, she and I laid the plot together; that one time, indeed, I myself was forced to deviate a little from the truth, but it was with a good design; the jade pretended to me that it was out of friendship to my master; that it was because she thought such a match would not be at all to his interest; but alas, sir! I know her friendship begins and ends at home, and that she has friendship for no person living but herself. Why, sir, do but look at Mariana, sir, and see whether you can think her such a sort of woman as she has described her to you.

Love. Indeed she has appeared to me always in a different light. I do believe what you say. This jade has been bribed by my children to impose upon me. I forgive thee all that thou hast done for this one service. I will go and deny all that I said to the lawyer, and put an end to every thing this moment. I knew it was impossible she could be such a sort of a woman. [*Exit.*

Ram. And I will go find out my master, make him the happiest of all mankind, squeeze his purse, and then get drunk for the honour of all party-coloured politicians. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*The Hall.*

Enter FREDERICK *and* LAPPET.

Fred. Excellent Lappet! I shall never think I have sufficiently rewarded you for what you have done.

Lap. I have only done half the business yet: I have, I believe, effectually broke off the match with your father. Now, sir, I shall make up the matter between you and her.

Fred. Do but that, dear girl! and I'll coin myself into guineas.

Lap. Keep yourself for your lady, sir; she will take all that sort of coin, I warrant her; as for me, I shall be much more easily contented.

Fred. But what hopes canst thou have? for I, alas! see none.

Lap. Oh, sir! it is more easy to make half-a-dozen matches than to break one; and, to say the truth, it is an office I myself like better. There is something, methinks, so pretty, in bringing young people together that are fond of one another. I protest, sir, you will be a mighty handsome couple. How fond you will be of a little girl the exact picture of her mother! and how fond will she be of a boy to put her in mind of his father!

Fred. Death! you jade, you have fired my imagination.

Lap. But methinks I want to have the hurricane begin hugely; I am surprised they are not all together by the ears already.

Enter RAMILIE.

Ram. Oh, madam, I little expected to have found you and my master together after what has happened: I did not think you had the assurance——

Fred. Peace, Ramilie! all is well, and Lappet is the best friend I have in the world.

Ram. Yes, sir, all is well indeed; no thanks to her: happy is the master that has a good servant; a good servant is certainly the greatest treasure in this world: I have done your business for you, sir; I have frustrated all she has been doing, deny'd all she has been telling him; in short, sir, I observed her ladyship in a long conference with the old gentleman, mightily to your interest, as you may imagine; no sooner was she gone than I steps in, and made the old gentleman believe every single syllable she had told him to be a most confounded lie, and away he is gone, fully determined to put an end to the affair.

Lap. And sign the contract: so now, sir, you are ruined without reprieve.

Fred. Death and damnation! fool! villain!

Ram. Hey-day! what is the meaning of this? have I done any more than you commanded me?

Fred. Nothing but my cursed stars could have contrived so damned an accident.

Ram. You cannot blame me, sir, whatever has happened.

Fred. I don't blame you, sir, nor myself, nor any one. Fortune has marked me out for misery: but I will be no longer idle: since I am to be ruined, I'll meet my destruction. [*Exit.*

[*They stand some time in silence, looking at each other.*

Lap. I give you joy, sir, of the success of your negotiation: you have approved yourself a most able person, truly; and I dare swear, when your skill is once known, you will not want employment.

Ram. Do not triumph, good Mrs Lappet! a politician may make a blunder; I am sure no one can avoid it that is employed with you, for you change sides so often, that 'tis impossible to tell at any time which side you are on.

Lap. And pray, sir, what was the occasion of betraying me to your master, for he has told me all?

Ram. Conscience, conscience! Mrs Lappet, the great guide of all my actions; I could not find in my heart to let him lose his mistress.

Lap. Your master is very much obliged to you indeed, to lose your own in order to preserve his. From henceforth I forbid all your addresses, I disown all obligations, I revoke all promises;

henceforth I would advise you never to open your lips to me, for if you do, it will be in vain: I shall be deaf to all your little, false, mean, treacherous, base insinuations: I would have you know, sir, a woman injured as I am, never can, nor ought to forgive. Never see my face again. [*Exit.*

Ram. Huh! now would some lovers think themselves very unhappy; but I, who have had experience in the sex, am never frightened at the frowns of a mistress, nor ravished with her smiles; they both naturally succeed one another; and a woman generally is as sure to perform what she threatens, as she is what she promises. But now I'll to my lurking place. I'm sure this old rogue has money hid in the garden; if I can but discover it, I shall handsomely quit all scores with the old gentleman, and make my master a sufficient return for the loss of his mistress. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*Another Apartment.*

Enter FREDERICK, *Mrs* WISELY, *and* MARIANA.

Fred. No, madam, I have no words to upbraid you with, nor shall I attempt it.

Mrs Wise. I think, sir, a respect to your father should keep you now within the rules of decency; as for my daughter, after what has happened, I think she cannot expect it on any other account.

Mar. Dear mamma! don't be serious, when I dare say Mr Frederick is in jest.

Fred. This exceeds all you have done; to insult the person you have made miserable is more cruel than having made him so.

Mar. Come, come, you may not be so miserable as you expect. I know the word mother-in-law has a terrible sound; but perhaps I may make a better than you imagine. Believe me you will see a change in this house which will not be disagreeable to a man of Mr Frederick's gay temper.

Fred. All changes to me are henceforth equal. When fortune robbed me of you, she made her utmost effort; I now despise all in her power.

Mrs. Wise. I must insist, sir, on your behaving in a different manner to my daughter: the world is apt to be censorious. Oh, heavens! I shudder at the apprehensions of having a reflection cast on my family, which has hitherto passed unblemished.

Fred. I shall take care, madam, to shun any possibility of giving you such a fear, for from this night I never will behold those fatal eyes again.

Mar. Nay, that I am sure will cast a reflection on me: what a person will the world think me to be when you could not live with me?

Fred. Live with you! Oh, Mariana! those words bring back a thousand tender ideas to my mind. Oh, had that been my blessed fortune!

Mrs Wise. Let me beg, sir, you would keep a greater distance. The young fellows of this age are so rampant, that even degrees of kindred cannot restrain them.

Fred. There are yet no such degrees between us—Oh, Mariana! while it is in your power, while the irrevocable wax remains unstamped, consider, and do not seal my ruin.

Mrs Wise. Come with me, daughter; you shall not stay a moment longer with him—A rude fellow! [*Exeunt Mrs* WISELY *and* MARIANA.

Enter RAMILIE.

Ram. Follow me, sir, follow me this instant.

Fred. What's the matter?

Ram. Follow me, sir; we are in the right box; the business is done.

Fred. What done?

Ram. I have it under my arm, sir—here it is!

Fred. What? what?

Ram. Your father's soul, sir, his money—— Follow me, sir, this moment, before we are overtaken.

Fred. Ha! this may preserve me yet.

[*Exeunt*

Enter LOVEGOLD *in the utmost distraction.*

Love. Thieves! thieves! assassination! murder! I am undone! all my money is gone! who is the thief? where is the villain? where shall I find him? Give me my money again, villain! [*Catching himself by the arm.*] I am distracted! I know not where I am, nor what I am, nor what I do. Oh, my money, my money! Ha! what say you? Alack-a-day! here is no one. The villain must have watched his time carefully; he must have done it while I was signing that damn'd contract. I will go to a justice, and have all my house put to their oaths, my servants, my children, my mistress, and myself too; all the people in the house, and in the street, and in the town, I will have them all executed; I will hang all the world, and if I don't find my money, I will hang myself afterwards.

[*Exit in a transport of rage.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Hall.*

Several Servants.

James. There will be rare doings now; madam's an excellent woman, faith! things won't go as they have done; she has ordered something like a supper; here will be victuals enough for the whole town.

Tho. She's a sweet-humoured lady, I can tell you that; I have had a very good place on't with her. You will have no more use for locks and keys in this house now.

James. This is the luckiest day I ever saw: as soon as supper is over, I will get drunk to her good health, I am resolved, and that's more than ever I could have done here before.

Tho. You sha'n't want liquor, for here are ten hogsheads of strong beer coming in.

James. Bless her heart, good lady! I wish she had a better bridegroom.

Tho. Ah, never mind that, he has a good purse; and for other things let her alone, Mr James.

Wheed. Thomas, you must go to Mr Mixture's the wine-merchant, and order him to send in twelve dozen of his best Champaigne, twelve dozen of Burgundy, and twelve dozen of Hermitage; and you must call at the wax-chandler's, and bid him send in a chest of candles; and at Lambert's the confectioner in Pall-mall, and order the finest dessert he can furnish: and you, Will, must go to Mr Gray's, the horse-jockey, and order him to buy my lady six of the finest geldings for her coach to-morrow morning; and here, you must take this roll, and invite all the people in it to supper; then you must go to the play-house in Drury-Lane, and engage all the music, for my lady intends to have a ball.

James. Oh, brave, Mrs Wheedle! here are fine times!

Wheed. My lady desires that supper may be kept back as much as possible; and if you can think of any thing to add to it, she desires you would.

James. She is the best of ladies.

Wheed. So you will say, when you know her better; she has thought of nothing ever since matters have been made up between her and your master, but how to lay out as much money as she could—We shall all have rare places.

James. I thought to have given warning to-morrow morning, but I believe I shall not be in haste now.

Wheed. See what it is to have a woman at the head of the house! but here she comes. Go you into the kitchen, and see that all things be in the nicest order.

James. I am ready to leap out of my skin for joy.

Enter MARIANA, FURNISH, *and Mrs* WISELY.

Mar. Wheedle, have you dispatched the servants according to my orders?

Wheed. Yes, madam.

Mar. You will take care, Mr Furnish, and let me have those two beds with the utmost expedition.

Fur. I shall take a particular care, madam; I shall put them both in hand to-morrow morning: I shall put off some work, madam, on that account.

Mar. That tapestry in the dining-room does not at all please me.

Fur. Your ladyship is very much in the right, madam; it is quite out of fashion; no one hangs a room now with tapestry.

Mar. Oh I have the greatest fondness for tapestry in the world! you must positively get me some of a newer pattern.

Fur. Truly, madam, as you say, tapestry is one of the prettiest sorts of furniture for a room that I know of. I believe I can shew you some that will please you.

Mrs Wise. I protest, child, I cann't see any reason for this alteration.

Mar. Dear mamma! let me have my will. There is not any one thing in the whole house that I shall be able to leave in it, every thing has so much of antiquity about it, and I cannot endure the sight of any thing that is not perfectly modern.

Fur. Your ladyship is in the right, madam; there is no possibility of being in the fashion without new furnishing a house at least once in twenty years; and indeed, to be at the very top of the fashion, you will have need of almost continual alterations.

Mrs Wise. That is an extravagance I would never submit to: I have no notion of destroying one's goods before they are half worn out, by following the ridiculous whims of two or three people of quality.

Fur. Ha! ha! madam, I believe her ladyship is of a different opinion—I have many a set of goods entirely whole, that I would be very loath to put into your hands.

Enter SATIN *and* SPARKLE.

Mar. Oh, Mr Satin! have you brought those gold stuffs I ordered you?

Sat. Yes, madam, I have brought your ladyship some of the finest patterns that were ever made.

Mar. Well, Mr Sparkle, have you the necklace and ear-rings with you?

Spar. Yes, madam, and I defy any jeweller in town to shew you their equals; they are, I think, the finest water I ever saw; they are finer than the Duchess of Glitter's, which have been so much admired: I have brought you a solitaire too, madam; my Lady Raffle bought the fellow of it yesterday.

Mar. Sure it has a flaw in it, sir.

Spar. Has it, madam? then there never was a brilliant without one! I am sure, madam, I bought it for a good stone, and if it be not a good stone, you shall have it for nothing.

Enter LOVEGOLD.

Love. It's lost, it's gone, it's irrecoverable; I shall never see it more!

Mar. And what will be the lowest price of the necklace and ear-rings?

Spar. If you were my sister, madam, I could not 'bate you one farthing of three thousand guineas.

Love What do you say of three thousand guineas, villain? have you my three thousand guineas?

Mrs Wise. Bless me, Mr Lovegold! what's the matter?

Love. I am undone; I am ruined! my money is stolen! my dear three thousand guineas, that I received but yesterday, are taken away from the place I had put them in, and I shall never see them again!

Mar. Don't let them make you uneasy, you may possibly recover them; or if you should not, the loss is but a trifle.

Love. How! a trifle! do you call three thousand guineas a trifle?

Mrs Wise. She sees you so disturbed, that she is willing to make as light of your loss as possible, in order to comfort you.

Love. To comfort me! can she comfort me by calling three thousand guineas a trifle? But tell me, what were you saying of them? have you seen them?

Spar. Really, sir, I do not understand you; I was telling the lady the price of a necklace and a pair of ear-rings, which were as cheap at three thousand guineas as——

Love. How! what! what!

Mar. I can't think them very cheap; however, I am resolved to have them; so let him have the money, sir, if you please.

Love. I am in a dream!

Mar. You will be paid immediately, sir. Well, Mr Satin, and pray what is the highest-priced gold stuff you have brought?

Sat. Madam, I have one of twelve pounds a-yard.

Mar. It must be pretty at that price; let me have a gown and petticoat cut off.

Love. You shall cut off my head first. What are you doing? are you mad?

Mar. I am only preparing a proper dress to appear in as your wife.

Love. Sirrah, offer to open any of your pick-pocket trinkets here, and I'll make an example of you.

Mar. Mr Lovegold, give me leave to tell you, this is a behaviour I don't understand: you give me a fine pattern before marriage of the usage I am to expect after it.

Love. Here are fine patterns of what I am to expect after it!

Mar. I assure you, sir, I shall insist on all the privileges of an English wife: I shall not be taught to dress by my husband; I am myself the best judge of what you can afford; and if I do stretch your purse a little, it is for your honour, sir: the world will know it is your wife that makes such a figure.

Love. Can you bear to hear this, madam?

Mrs Wise. I should not countenance my daughter in any extravagance, sir; but the honour of my family as well as yours is concerned in her appearing handsomely. Let me tell you, Mr Lovegold, the whole world is very sensible of your fondness for money; I think it a very great blessing to you that you have met with a woman of a different temper, one who will preserve your reputation in the world, whether you will or no: not that I would insinuate to you that my daughter will ever—She will never run you into unnecessary expences; so far from it, that, if you will but generously make her a present of five thousand pounds to fit herself out at first in clothes and jewels, I dare swear you will not have any other demand on those accounts—I don't know when.

Mar. No, unless a birth-night suit or two, I shall scarce want any thing more this twelvemonth.

Love. I am undone, plundered, murdered! however, there is one comfort, I am not married yet.

Mar. And free to choose whether you will marry at all or no.

Mrs Wise. The consequence, you know, will be no more than a poor ten thousand pounds, which is all the forfeiture of the breach of contract.

Love. But, madam, I have one way yet: I have not bound my heirs and executors, and so, if I hang myself, I am off the bargain—In the mean while I'll try if I cannot rid my house of this nest of thieves—Get out of my doors, you cut-purses!

Spar. Pay me for my jewels, sir, or return 'em me.

Love. Give him his baubles, give them him.

Mar. I shall not, I assure you.—You need be under no apprehension, sir; you see Mr Lovegold is a little disordered at present, but if you will come to-morrow, you shall have your money.

Spar. I'll depend on your ladyship, madam.

Love. Who the devil are you? what have you to do here?

Fur. I am an upholsterer, sir, and am come to new-furnish your house.

Love. Out of my doors this instant or I will disfurnish your head for you; I'll beat out your brains.

Mrs Wise. Sure, sir, you are mad.

Love. I was when I signed the contract. Oh, that I had never learned to write my name!

Enter CHARLES BUBBLEBOY.

Bub. Your most obedient servant, madam.

Love. Who are you, sir? what do you want here?

Bub. Sir, my name is Charles Bubbleboy.

Love. What's your business?

Bub. Sir, I was ordered to bring some snuff-boxes and rings. Will you please, sir, to look at that snuff-box? there is but one person in England, sir, can work in this manner; if he were but as diligent as he is able, he would get an immense estate, sir; if he had an hundred thousand hands I could keep them all employed. I have brought you a pair of the new-invented snuffers too, madam; be pleased to look at them; they are my own invention; the nicest lady in the world may make use of them.

Love. Who the devil sent for you, sir?

Mar. I sent for him, sir.

Bub. Yes, sir, I was told it was a lady sent foy me. Will you please, madam, to look at the snuff-boxes or rings first?

Love. Will you please to go to the devil, sir, first, or shall I send you?

Bub. Sir!

Love. Get you out of my house this instant, or I'll break your snuff-boxes and your bones too

Bub. Sir, I was sent for, or I should not have come. Charles Bubbleboy does not want custom. Madam, your most obedient servant.

[*Exit.*

Mar. I suppose, sir, you expect to be finely spoken of abroad for this; you will get an excellent character in the world by this behaviour?

Mrs Wise. Is this your gratitude to a woman who has refused so much better offers on your account?

Love. Oh, would she had taken them! Give me up my contract, and I will gladly resign all right and title whatsoever.

Mrs Wise. It is too late now, the gentlemen have had their answers; a good offer, once refused, is not to be had again.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Madam, the tailor, whom your ladyship sent for, is come.

Mar. Bid him come in. This is an instance of the regard I have for you. I have sent for one of the best tailors in town to make you a new suit of clothes, that you may appear like a gentleman: for, as it is for your honour that I should be well dressed, so it is for mine that you should. Come, madam, we will go in, and give farther orders concerning the entertainment.

[*Exeunt Mrs* WISELY *and* MARIANA.

Enter LIST.

Love. Oh, Lappet, Lappet! the time thou hast prophesied of is come to pass.

List. I am your honour's most humble servant. My name is List: I presume I am the person you sent for—The laceman will be here immediately. Will your honour be pleased to be taken measure of first, or look over the patterns? if you please we will take measure first. I do not know, sir, who was so kind as to recommend me to you, but I believe I shall give you entire satisfaction. I may defy any tailor in England to understand the fashion better than myself; the thing is impossible, sir. I always visit France twice a-year; and, though I say it, that should not say it——Stand upright, if you please, sir———

Love. I'll take measure of your back, sirrah—I'll teach such pick-pockets as you are to come here—Out of my doors, you villain!

List. Hey-day, sir! did you send for me for this, sir?—I shall bring you in a bill without any clothes. [*Exit.*

Enter JAMES *and Porter.*

Love. Where are you going? what have you there?

James. Some fine wine, sir, that my lady sent for to Mr Mixture's—But, sir, it will be impossible for me to get supper ready by twelve, as it is ordered, unless I have more assistance. I want half-a-dozen kitchens too. The very wild fowl that my lady has sent for will take up a dozen spits.

Love. Oh! oh! it is in vain to oppose it: her extravagance is like a violent fire, that is no sooner stopped in one place than it breaks out in another.—[*Drums beat without.*] Ha! what's the meaning of this? is my house besieged? would they would set it on fire, and burn all in it!

[*Drum without.*] Heavens bless your honour! 'Squire Lovegold, Madam Lovegold, long life and happiness, and many children attend you—and so God save the king! [*Drums beat.*

[LOVEGOLD *goes out, and soon after the drums cease.*

James. So he has quieted the drums I find—This is the roguery of some well-wishing neighbours of his. Well, we shall soon see which will get the better, my master or my mistress: if my master does, away go I; if my mistress, I'll stay while there's any housekeeping, which cann't be long; for the riches of my lord mayor will never hold it out at this rate.

Enter LOVEGOLD.

Love. James! I shall be destroyed; in one week I shall not be worth a groat upon earth. Go, send all the provisions back to the tradesmen, put out all the fires, leave not so much as a candle burning.

James. Sir, I don't know how to do it; madam commanded me, and I dare not disobey her.

Love. How! not when I command thee?

James. I have lost several places, sir, by obeying the master against the mistress, but never lost one by obeying the mistress against the master. Besides, sir, she is so good and generous a lady, that it would go against my very heart to offend her.

Love. The devil take her generosity!

James. And I don't believe she has provided one morsel more than will be eat: why, sir, she has invited above five hundred people to supper: within this hour your house will be as full as Westminster-hall the last day of term—But I have no time to lose.

Love. Oh! oh! what shall I do?

Enter LAPPET.

Lap. Where is my poor master? Oh, sir, I cannot express the affliction I am in to see you devoured in this manner. How could you, sir, when I told you what a woman she was, how could you undo yourself with your eyes open?

Love. Poor Lappet! had I taken your advice I had been happy.

Lap. And I too, sir; for, alack-a-day! I am as miserable as you are; I feel every thing for you, sir; indeed I shall break my heart upon your account.

Love. I shall be much obliged to you if you do, Lappet.

Lap. How could a man of your sense, sir, marry in so precipitate a manner?

Love. I am not married: I am not married.

Lap. Not married!

Love. No, no, no.

Lap. All's safe yet. No man is quite undone till he is married.

Love. I am, I am undone. Oh, Lappet! I cannot tell it thee. I have given her a bond, a bond, a bond, of ten thousand pounds, to marry her!

Lap. You shall forfeit it.

Love. Forfeit what? my life, and soul, and blood, and heart!

Lap. You shall forfeit it——

Love. I'll be buried alive sooner: no, I am determined I'll marry her first, and hang myself afterwards, to save my money.

Lap. I see, sir, you are undone; and if you should hang yourself, I could not blame you.

Love. Could I but save one thousand by it, I would hang myself with all my soul. Shall I live to die not worth a groat?

Lap. Oh, my poor master! my poor master! [*Crying.*

Love. Why did I not die a year ago? what a deal had I saved by dying a year ago! [*A noise without.*] Oh! oh! dear Lappet! see what it is! I shall be undone in an hour—Oh!

Enter CLERIMONT, *richly dressed.*

Love. What is here?—some of the people who are to eat me up?

Cler. Don't you know me, sir?

Love. Know you! ha! what is the meaning of this?—Oh, it is plain, it is too plain; my money has paid for all this finery. Ah, base wretch! could I have suspected you of such an action, of lurking in my house to use me in such a manner?

Cler. Sir, I am come to confess the fact to you; and if you will but give me leave to reason with you, you will not find yourself so much injured as you imagine.

Love. Not injured! when you have stolen away my blood?

Cler. Your blood is not fallen into bad hands: I am a gentleman, sir.

Love. Here's impudence! a fellow robs me, and tells me he is a gentleman!—Tell me who tempted you to it?

Cler. Ah, sir! need I say—love.

Love. Love!

Cler. Yes, love, sir.

Love. Very pretty love, indeed! the love of my guineas.

Cler. Ah, sir, think not so. Do but grant me the free possession of what I have, and, by heaven, I'll never ask you more.

Love. Oh, most unequalled impudence! was ever so modest a request?

Cler. All your efforts to separate us will be vain; we have sworn never to forsake each other, and nothing but death can part us.

Love. I don't question, sir, the very great affection on your side; but I believe I shall find methods to recover——

Cler. By heavens I'll die in defending my right! and, if that were the case, think not, when I am gone, you ever could possess what you have robbed me of.

Love. Ha! that's true; he may find ways to prevent the restoring it.—Well, well, let me delight my eyes at least; let me see my treasure, and perhaps I may give it you, perhaps I may.

Cler. Then I am blest! Well may you say treasure, for to possess that treasure is to be rich indeed.

Love. Yes, truly, I think three thousand pounds may well be called a treasure.—Go, go, fetch it hither; perhaps I may give it you—fetch it hither.

Cler. To shew you, sir, the confidence I place in you, I will fetch hither all that I love and adore. [*Exit.*

Love. Sure never was so impudent a fellow! to confess his robbery before my face, and desire to keep what he has stolen as if he had a right to it.

Enter LAPPET.

Love. Oh, Lappet! what's the matter?

Lap. Oh, sir! I am scarce able to tell you. It is spread about the town that you are married, and your wife's creditors are coming in whole flocks. There is one single debt for five thousand pounds, which an attorney is without to demand.

Love. Oh! oh! oh! let them cut my throat.

Lap. Think what an escape you have had! think if you had married her——

Love. I am as bad as married to her.

Lap. It is impossible, sir, nothing can be so bad: what, you are to pay her ten thousand pounds—Well—and ten thousand pounds are a sum; they are a sum, I own it—they are a sum; but what is such a sum compared with such a wife? had you married her, in one week you would have been in a prison, sir—

Love. If I am, I can keep my money; they cann't take that from me.

Lap. Why, sir, you will lose twice the value of your contract before you know how to turn yourself; and if you have no value for liberty, yet consider, sir, such is the great goodness of our laws, that a prison is one of the dearest places you can live in.

Love. Ten thousand pounds!—No—I'll be hanged, I'll be hanged.

Lap. Suppose, sir, it were possible (not that I believe it is,) but suppose it were possible to make her abate a little; suppose one could bring her to eight thousand——

Love. Eight thousand devils take her——

Lap. But, dear sir! consider, nay, consider immediately, for every minute you lose you lose a sum—Let me beg you, entreat you, my dear good master! let me prevail on you, not to be ruined. Be resolute, sir; consider every guinea you give saves you a score.

Love. Well, if she will consent to, to, to, eight hundred—But try, do try, if you can make her 'bate any thing of that—if you can—you shall have a twentieth part of what she 'bates for yourself.

Lap. Why, sir, if I could get you off at eight thousand, you ought to leap out of your skin for joy.

Love. Would I were out of my skin!—

Lap. You will have more reason to wish so

when you are in the hands of bailiffs for your wife's debts—

Love. Why was I begotten! why was I born! why was I brought up! why was I not knocked o'th' head before I knew the value of money!

Lap. [*Knocking without.*] So, so, more duns I suppose—Go but into the kitchen, sir, or the hall, and it will have a better effect on you than all I can say.

Love. What have I brought myself to? what shall I do? Part with eight thousand pounds! misery, destruction, beggary, prisons! But then, on the other side, are wife, ruin, chains, slavery, torment! I shall run distracted either way!

[*Exit.*

Lap. Ah! would we could once prove you so, you old covetous good-for-nothing.

Enter MARIANA.

Mar. Well, what success?

Lap. It is impossible to tell; he is just gone into the kitchen, where, if he is not frightened into our design, I shall begin to despair. They say fear will make a coward brave, but nothing can make him generous; the very fear of losing all he is worth will scarce bring him to part with a penny.

Mar. And have you acquainted neither Frederick nor Harriet with my intentions?

Lap. Neither, I assure you. Ah, madam, had I not been able to have kept a secret, I had never brought about those affairs that I have: were I not secret, Lud have mercy upon many a virtuous woman's reputation in this town!

Mar. And don't you think I have kept my real intentions very secret?

Lap. From every one but me I believe you have: I assure you I knew them long before you sent for me this afternoon to discover them to me.

Mar. But could you bring him to no terms, no proposals? did he make no offer?

Lap. It must be done all at once, and while you are by.

Mar. So you think he must see me, to give any thing to be rid of me?

Lap. Hush, hush! I hear him coming again.

Enter LOVEGOLD.

Love. I am undone! I am undone! I am eat up! I am devoured! I have an army of cooks in my house.

Lap. Dear madam! consider; I know eight thousand pounds are a trifle; I know they are nothing; my master can very well afford them; they will make no hole in his purse; and if you should stand out you will get more.

Love. [*Putting his hand before* LAPPET'S *mouth.*] You lie, you lie, you lie, you lie, you lie: she never could get more, never should get more; it is more than I am worth; it is an immense sum; and I will be starved, drowned, shot, hanged, burnt, before I part with a penny of it.

Lap. For Heaven's sake, sir, you will ruin all—Madam, let me beg you, entreat you, to 'bate these two thousand pounds. Suppose a law-suit should be the consequence, I know my master would be cast; I know it would cost him an immense sum of money, and that he would pay the charges of both in the end; but you might be kept out of it a long time. Eight thousand pounds now are better than ten five years hence.

Mar. No; the satisfaction of my revenge on a man who basely departs from his word will make me amends for the delay; and whatever I suffer, as long as I know his ruin will be the consequence, I shall be easy.

Love. Oh, bloody-minded wretch!

Lap. Why, sir, since she insists on it, what does it signify? You know you are in her power, and it will be only throwing away more money to be compelled to it at last; get rid of her at once; what are two thousand pounds? why, sir, the Court of Chancery will eat it up for a breakfast: it has been given for a mistress, and will you not give it to be rid of a wife?

[*They whisper.*

Enter THOMAS *and* JAMES.

[LOVEGOLD *and* LAPPET *talk apart.*

Tho. Madam, the music are come which your ladyship ordered, and most of the company will be here immediately.

James. Where will your ladyship be pleased the servants shall eat, for there is no room in the house that will be large enough to entertain 'em.

Mar. Then beat down the partition, and turn two rooms into one.

James. There is no service in the house proper for the dessert, madam.

Mar. Send immediately to the great china shop in the Strand for the finest that is there.

Love. How! and will you swear a robbery against her? that she robbed me of what I shall give her?

Lap. Depend on it, sir.

Love. I'll break open a bureau to make it look the more likely.

Lap. Do so, sir; but lose no time; give it her this moment.—Madam, my master has consented, and if you have the contract, he is ready to pay the money. Be sure to break open the bureau, sir. [*Aside.*

Mar. Here is the contract.

Love. I'll fetch the money: it is all I am worth in the world. [*Exit.*

Mar. Sure he will never be brought to it yet.

Lap. I warrant him: but you are to pay dearer for it than you imagine, for I am to swear a robbery against you. What will you give me, madam, to buy off my evidence?

Mar. And is it possible that the old rogue would consent to such a villany?

Lap. Ay, madam; for half that sum he would hang half the town. But truly I can never be made amends for all the pains I have taken on your account. Were I to receive a single guinea a lie, for every one I have told this day, it would make me a pretty tolerable fortune. Ah, madam, what a pity it is that a woman of my excellent talents should be confined to so low a sphere of

life as I am! had I been born a great lady, what a deal of good should I have done in the world!

Enter LOVEGOLD.

Love. Here, here they are—all in bank-notes—all the money I am worth in the world—(I have sent for a constable; she must not go out of sight before we have her taken into custody.)

[*Aside to* LAPPET.

Lap. [*To* LOVEGOLD.] You have done very wisely.

Mar. There, sir, is your contract. And now, sir, I have nothing to do but to make myself as easy as I can in my loss.

Enter FREDERICK, CLERIMONT, *and* HARRIET.

Love. Where is that you promised me? where is my treasure?

Cler. Here, sir, is all the treasure I am worth; a treasure which the whole world's worth should not purchase.

Love. Give me the money, sir, give me the money; I say, give me the money you stole from me.

Cler. I understand you not.

Love. Did you not confess you robbed me of my treasure?

Cler. This, sir, is the inestimable treasure I meant! Your daughter, sir, has this day blest me by making me her husband.

Love. How! oh, wicked, vile wretch! to run away thus with a pitiful mean fellow, thy father's clerk!

Cler. Think not your family disgraced, sir! I am at least your equal born; and though my fortune be not so large, as for my dearest Harriet's sake I wish, still it is such as will put it out of your power to make us miserable.

Love. Oh! my money, my money, my money!

Fred. If this lady does not make you amends for the loss of your money, resign over all pretensions in her to me, and I will engage to get it restored to you.

Love. How, sirrah? are you a confederate? have you helped to rob me?

Fred. Softly, sir, or you shall never see your guineas again.

Love. I resign her over to you entirely, and may you both starve together! so, go fetch my gold——

Mar. You are easily prevailed upon, I see, to resign a right which you have not. But were I to resign over myself, it would hardly be the man's fortune to starve, whose wife brought him ten thousand pounds.

Love. Bear witness, she has confessed she has the money, and I shall prove she stole it from me. She has broke open my bureau; Lappet is my evidence.

Lap. I hope I shall have all your pardons, and particularly yours, madam, whom I have most injured.

Love. A fig for her pardon! you are doing a right action.

Lap. Then if there were any robbery, you must have robbed yourself. This lady can only be a receiver of stolen goods, for I saw you give her the money with your own hands.

Love. How! I! you! what! what!

Lap. And I must own it, with shame I must own it—that the money you gave her in exchange for the contract I promised to swear she had stolen from you.

Cler. Is it possible Mr Lovegold could be capable of such an action as this?

Love. I am undone, undone, undone!

Fred. No, sir, your three thousand guineas are safe yet; depend upon it, within an hour you shall find them in the same place they were first deposited. I thought to have purchased a reprieve with them, but I find my fortune has of itself bestowed that on me.

Love. Give 'em me, give 'em me, this instant—but then the ten thousand, where are they?

Mar. Where they ought to be, in the hands of one who I think deserves them. [*Gives them to* FREDERICK.] You see, sir, I had no design to the prejudice of your family: nay, I have proved the best friend you ever had; for I presume you are now thoroughly cured of your longing for a young wife.

Love. Sirrah! give me my notes, give me my notes.

Fred. You must excuse me, sir; I can part with nothing I receive from this lady.

Love. Then I will go to law with that lady and you, and all of you; for I will have them again, if law or justice, or injustice, will give them me.

Cler. Be pacified, sir; I think the lady has acted nobly in giving that back again into your family which she might have carried out of it.

Love. My family be hanged! If I am robbed, I don't care who robs me. I would as soon hang my son as another—and I will hang him if he does not restore me all I have lost: for I would not give half the sum to save the whole world—I will go and employ all the lawyers in town; for I will have my money again, or never sleep more. [*Exit.*

Fred. I am resolved we will get the better of him now: but oh, Mariana! your generosity is much greater in bestowing this sum than my happiness in receiving it: I am an unconscionable beggar, and shall never be satisfied while you have any thing to bestow.

Mar. Do you hear him?

Har. Yes, and begin to approve him; for your late behaviour has convinced me—

Mar. Dear girl! no more; you have frightened me already so much to-day, that, rather than venture a second lecture, I would do whatever you wished: so, sir, if I do bestow all on you, here is the lady you are to thank for it.

Har. Well, this I will say, when you do a good-natured thing you have the prettiest way of doing it. And now, Mariana, I am ready to ask your pardon for all I said to-day.

Mar. Dear Harriet! no apologies! all you said I deserved.

Enter LAPPET *and* RAMILIE.

Lap. Treaties are going on on both sides, while you and I seem forgotten.

Ram. Why, have we not done them all the service we can? What farther have they to do with us?—Sir, there are some people in masquerading habits without.

Mar. Some I sent for to assist in my design on your father: I think we will give them admittance, though we have done without 'em.

Omnes. Oh! by all means.

Fred. Mrs Lappet, be assured I have a just sense of your favours, and both you and Ramilie shall find my gratitude. [*Dance here.*

Fred. Dear Clerimont! be satisfied I shall make no peace with the old gentleman in which you shall not be included. I hope my sister will prove a fortune equal to your deserts.

Cler. While I am enabled to support her in an affluence equal to her desires, I shall desire no more. From what I have seen lately, I think riches are rather to be feared than wished; at least I am sure avarice, which too often attends wealth, is a greater evil than any that is found in poverty. Misery is generally the end of all vice, but it is the very mark at which avarice seems to aim; the Miser endeavours to be wretched;

He hoards eternal cares within his purse,
And what he wishes most, proves most his curse.

[*Exeunt.*

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY COLLEY CIBBER.

OUR author's sure bewitch'd! the senseless rogue
Insists, no good play wants an epilogue.
Suppose that true, said I, What's that to this?
Is yours a good one?—No, but Moliere's is,
He cried, and, zounds! no epilogue was tack'd to his.
Besides, your modern epilogues, said he,
Are but ragouts of smut and ribaldry,
Where the false jests are dwindled to so few,
There's scarce one double entendre left that's new;
Nor would I in that lovely circle raise
One blush to gain a thousand coxcombs' praise:
Then for the threadbare jokes of cit and wit,
Whose foreknown rhyme is echo'd from the pit,
Till of their laugh the galleries are bit;
Then to reproach the critics with ill-nature,
And charge their malice to his stinging satire,
And thence appealing to the nicer boxes,
Though talking stuff might dash the Drury doxies;
If these, he cried, the choice ingredients be
For epilogues, they shall have none from me.
Lord, sir! says I, the gallery will so bawl.
Let 'em, he cried; a bad one's worse than none at all.
Madam, these things than you I'm more expert in,
Nor do I see no epilogue much hurt in.
Zounds! when the play is ended—drop the curtain.

THE

SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND.

BY

Dr HOADLY.

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY MR GARRICK.

WHILE other culprits brave it to the last,
Nor beg for mercy till the judgment's past;
Poets alone, as conscious of their crimes,
Open their trials with imploring rhymes.
Thus cramm'd with flattery and low submission,
Each trite dull prologue is the bard's petition.
A stale device to calm the critic's fury,
And bribe at once the judges and the jury.
But what avail such poor repeated arts?
The whimp'ring scribbler ne'er can touch your hearts;
Nor ought an ill-timed pity to take place——
Fast as they rise, destroy th' increasing race:
The vermin else will run the nation o'er——
By saving one you breed a million more.

Though disappointed authors rail and rage
At fancy'd parties, and a senseless age,
Yet still has justice triumph'd on the stage.
Thus speaks and thinks the author of to-day,
And, saying this, has little more to say.
He asks no friend his partial zeal to show,
Nor fears the groundless censures of a foe;
He knows no friendship can protect the fool,
Nor will an audience be a party's tool.
'Tis inconsistent with a free-born spirit,
To side with folly, or to injure merit.
By your decision he must fall or stand,
Nor, though he feels the lash, will blame the hand.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Mr STRICTLAND.
FRANKLY.
BELLAMY.
RANGER.
JACK MEGGOT.
BUCKLE.
TESTER.
Servant to Ranger.
SIMON.

WOMEN.

Mrs STRICTLAND.
CLARINDA.
JACINTHA.
LUCETTA.
Landlady.
Milliner.
Maid.

SCENE,—*London.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—RANGER'S *Chambers in the Temple.*

A knocking is heard at the Door for some time; when RANGER *enters, having let himself in.*

Ran. Once more I am got safe to the Temple. Let me reflect a little. I have sat up all night: I have my head full of bad wine, and the noise of oaths, dice, and the damned tinkling of tavern bells; my spirits jaded, and my eyes sunk in my head; and all this for the conversation of a company of fellows I despise. Their wit lies only in obscenity, their mirth in noise, and their delight in a box and dice. Honest Ranger, take my word for it, thou art a mighty silly fellow.

Enter a Servant with a wig dressed.

Where have you been, rascal? If I had not had the key in my pocket, I must have waited at the door in this dainty dress.

Serv. I was only below combing out your honour's wig.

Ran. Well, give me my cap.—[*Pulling off his wig*] Why, how like a raking dog do you look, compared to that spruce, sober gentleman! Go, you battered devil, and be made fit to be seen.

[*Throwing his wig to the Servant.*

Serv. Cod, my master's very merry this morning. [*Exit.*

Ran. And now for the law. [*Sits down and reads.*

"Tell me no more, I am deceived,
That Chloe's false and common;
By heav'n, I all along believed,
She was a very woman.
As such I liked, as such caress'd;
She still was constant when possess'd:
She could do more for no man."

Honest Congreve was a man after my own heart.

Servants pass over the Stage.

Have you been for the money this morning, as I ordered you?

Serv. No, sir. You bade me go before you was up; I did not know your honour meant before you went to bed.

Ran. None of your jokes, I pray; but to business. Go to the coffee-house, and inquire if there has been any letter or message left for me.

Serv. I shall, sir.

Ran. [*Repeats.*]

"You think she's false, I'm sure she's kind,
I take her body, you her mind;
Which has the better bargain?"

Oh, that I had such a soft, deceitful fair, to lull my senses to their desired sleep. [*Knocking at the door.*] Come in.

Enter SIMON.

Oh, Master Simon, is it you? How long have you been in town?

Sim. Just come, sir, and but for a little time neither; and yet I have as many messages as if we were to stay the whole year round. Here they are, all of them, [*Pulls out a number of cards.*] and among them one for your honour.

Ran. [*Reads.*] "Clarinda's compliments to her cousin Ranger, and should be glad to see him for ever so little a time that he can be spared from the more weighty business of the law." Ha, ha, ha! the same merry girl I ever knew her.

Sim. My lady is never sad, sir.

[*Knocking at the door.*

Ran. Pr'ythee, Simon, open the door.

Enter Milliner.

Well, child——and who are you?

Mil. Sir, my mistress gives her service to you, and has sent you home the linen you bespoke.

Ran. Well, Simon, my service to your lady, and let her know I will most certainly wait upon her. I am a little busy, Simon——and so——

Sim. Ah, you're a wag, Master Ranger, you're a wag———but mum for that. [*Exit.*

Ran. I swear, my dear, you have the prettiest pair of eyes——the loveliest pouting lips——I never saw you before.

Mil. No, sir! I was always in the shop.

Ran. Were you so? Well, and what does your mistress say?—The devil fetch me, child, you look'd so prettily, that I could not mind one word you said.

Mil. Lord, sir, you are such another gentleman! Why she says, she is sorry she could not send them sooner. Shall I lay them down?

Ran. No, child. Give 'em to me——Dear little smiling angel—— [*Catches and kisses her.*

Mil. I beg, sir, you would be civil.

Ran. Civil! 'egad, I think I am very civil.

[*Kisses her again.*

Enter a Servant, and BELLAMY.

Serv. Sir, Mr Bellamy.

Ran. Damn your impertinence!—Oh, Mr Bellamy, your servant.

Mil. What shall I say to my mistress?

Ran. Bid her make half a dozen more; but be sure you bring them home yourself. [*Exit Milliner.*] Pshaw! Pox! Mr Bellamy, how should you like to be served so yourself?

Bel. How can you, Ranger, for a minute's pleasure, give an innocent girl the pain of heart I am confident she felt?——There was a modest blush upon her cheek convinces me she is honest.

Ran. May be so. I was resolved to try, however, had you not interrupted the experiment.

Bel. Fie, Ranger! will you never think?

Ran. Yes, but I cann't be always a-thinking. The law is a damnable dry study, Mr Bellamy, and without something now and then to amuse

and relax, it would be too much for my brain, I promise ye——But I am a mighty sober fellow grown. Here have I been at it these three hours, but the wenches will never let me alone.

Bel. Three hours! Why, do you usually study in such shoes and stockings?

Ran. Rat your inquisitive eyes! *Ex pede Herculem.* 'Egad, you have me. The truth is, I am but this moment return'd from the tavern. What, Frankly here too!

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. My boy, Ranger, I am heartily glad to see you; Bellamy, let me embrace you; you are the person I want; I have been at your lodgings, and was directed hither.

Ran. It is to him then I am obliged for this visit: but with all my heart. He is the only man to whom I don't care how much I am obliged.

Bel. Your humble servant, sir.

Frank. You know, Ranger, I want no inducement to be with you. But——you look sadly—What——no merciless jade has——has she?

Ran. No, no; sound as a roach, my lad. I only got a little too much liquor last night, which I have not slept off yet.

Bel. Thus, Frankly, it is every day. All the morning his head achs; at noon he begins to clear up; towards evening he is good company; and all night he is carefully providing for the same course the next day.

Ran. Why, I must own, my ghostly father, I did relapse a little last night, just to furnish out a decent confession for the day.

Frank. And he is now doing penance for it.—Were you his confessor, indeed, you could not well desire more.

Ran. Charles, he sets up for a confessor with the worst grace in the world. Here has he been reproving me for being but decently civil to my milliner. Plague! because the coldness of his constitution makes him insensible of a fine woman's charms, every body else must be so too.

Bel. I am no less sensible of their charms than you are, though I cannot kiss every woman I meet, or fall in love, as you call it, with every face which has the bloom of youth upon it. I would only have you a little more frugal of your pleasures.

Frank. My dear friend, this is very pretty talking! But let me tell you, it is in the power of the very first glance from a fine woman utterly to disconcert all your philosophy.

Bel. It must be from a fine woman then, and not such as are generally reputed so. And it must be a thorough acquaintance with her too, that will ever make an impression on my heart.

Ran. Would I could see it once! For when a man has been all his life hoarding up a stock, without allowing himself common necessaries, it tickles me to the soul to see him lay it all out upon a wrong bottom, and become bankrupt at last.

Bel. Well, I don't care how soon you see it. For the minute I find a woman capable of friendship, love, and tenderness, with good sense enough to be always easy, and good-nature enough to like me, I will immediately put it to the trial, which of us shall have the greatest share of happiness from the sex, you or I.

Ran. By marrying her, I suppose! Capable of friendship, love, and tenderness! ha, ha, ha! that a man of your sense should talk so. If she be capable of love, 'tis all I require of my mistress; and as every woman, who is young, is capable of love, I am very reasonably in love with every young woman I meet. My lord Coke, in a case I read this morning, speaks my sense.

Both. My Lord Coke!

Ran. Yes, *my* Lord Coke. What he says of one woman I say of the whole sex; "I take their bodies, you their mind! which has the better bargain?"

Frank. There is no arguing with so great a lawyer. Suppose, therefore, we adjourn the debate to some other time. I have some serious business with Mr Bellamy, and you want sleep, I am sure.

Ran. Sleep! mere loss of time and hindrance of business—We men of spirit, sir, are above it.

Bel. Whither shall we go?

Frank. Into the Park. My chariot is at the door.

Bel. Then if my servant calls, you'll send him after us. [*Exeunt.*

Ran. I will. [*Looking on the card.*] Clarinda's compliments—A pox on this head of mine; never once to ask where she was to be found. It's plain she is not one of us, or I should not have been so remiss in my inquiries. No matter; I shall meet her in my walks.

Servant enters.

Serv. There is no letter nor message, sir.

Ran. Then my things, to dress.

"I take her body, you her mind; which has the better bargain?" [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Chamber.*

Enter Mrs STRICTLAND *and* JACINTHA *meeting.*

Mrs Str. Good-morrow, my dear Jacintha.

Jac. Good-morrow to you, madam. I have brought my work, and intend to sit with you this morning. I hope you have got the better of your fatigue. Where is Clarinda? I should be glad if she would come and work with us.

Mrs Str. She work! she is too fine a lady to do any thing. She is not stirring yet—we must let her have her rest. People of her waste of spirits require more time to recruit again.

Jac. It is pity she should be ever tired with what is so agreeable to every body else. I am prodigiously pleased with her company.

Mrs Str. And when you are better acquainted, you will be still more pleased with her. You must rally her upon her partner at Bath; for I fancy part of her rest has been disturbed on his account.

Jac. Was he really a pretty fellow?

Mrs Str. That I cann't tell; I did not dance myself, and so did not much mind him. You must have the whole story from herself.

Jac. Oh, I warrant ye, I get it all out. None are so proper to make discoveries in love, as those who are in the secret themselves.

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. Madam, Mr Strictland is inquiring for you. Here has been Mr Buckle with a letter from his master, which has made him very angry.

Jac. Mr Bellamy said, indeed, he would try him once more, but I fear it will prove in vain. Tell your master I am here. [*Exit* LUCETTA.] What signifies fortune, when it only makes us slaves to other people?

Mrs Str. Do not be uneasy, my Jacintha. You shall always find a friend in me: but as for Mr Strictland, I know not what ill temper hangs about him lately. Nothing satisfies him. You saw how he received us when we came off our journey. Though Clarinda was so good company, he was barely civil to her, and downright rude to me.

Jac. I cannot help saying, I did observe it.

Mrs Str. I saw you did. Hush! he's here.

Enter Mr STRICTLAND.

Str. Oh, your servant, madam: Here, I have received a letter from Mr Bellamy, wherein he desires I would once more hear what he has to say. You know my sentiments; nay, so does he.

Jac. For Heaven's sake, consider, sir, this is no new affair, no sudden start of passion; we have known each other long. My father valued and loved him, and I am sure, were he alive, I should have his consent.

Str. Don't tell me. Your father would not have you marry against his will; neither will I against mine: I am your father now.

Jac. And you take a fatherly care of me.

Str. I wish I had never had any thing to do with you.

Jac. You may easily get rid of the trouble.

Str. By listening, I suppose, to the young gentleman's proposals.

Jac. Which are very reasonable, in my opinion.

Str. Oh, very modest ones truly; and a very modest gentleman he is that proposes them! A fool, to expect a lady of thirty thousand pounds fortune should, by the care and prudence of her guardian, be thrown away upon a young fellow not worth three hundred a-year. He thinks being in love is an excuse for this; but I am not in love: what does he think will excuse me?

Mrs Str. Well, but, Mr Strictland, I think the gentleman should be heard.

Str. Well, well, seven o'clock is the time, and if the man has had the good fortune, since I saw him last, to persuade somebody or other to give him a better estate, I give him my consent, not else. His servant waits below: you may tell him I shall be at home. [*Exit* JAC.] But where is your friend, your other half, all this while? I thought you could not have breathed a minute without your Clarinda.

Mrs Str. Why, the truth is, I was going to see what makes her keep her chamber so long.

Str. Look ye, Mrs Strictland, you have been asking me for money this morning. In plain terms, not one shilling shall pass through these fingers, till you have cleared my house of this Clarinda.

Mrs Str. How can her innocent gaiety have offended you? she is a woman of honour, and has as many good qualities—

Str. As women of honour generally have. I know it, and therefore am uneasy.

Mrs Str. But, sir——

Str. But, madam——Clarinda, nor e'er a rake of fashion in England, shall live in my family to debauch it.

Mrs Str. Sir, she treated me with so much civility in the country, that I thought I could not do less than invite her to spend as much time with me in town as her engagements would permit. I little imagined you could have been displeased at my having so agreeable a companion.

Str. There was a time when I was company enough for leisure hours.

Mrs Str. There was a time when every word of mine was sure of meeting with a smile; but those happy days, I know not why, have long been over.

Str. I cannot bear a rival, even of your own sex. I hate the very name of female friends. No two of you can ever be an hour by yourselves, but one or both are the worse for it.

Mrs Str. Dear Mr Strictland——

Str. This I know, and will not suffer.

Mrs Str. It grieves me, sir, to see you so much in earnest: but, to convince you how willing I am to make you easy in every thing, it shall be my request to her to remove immediately.

Str. Do it——hark ye——your request?—Why yours? 'tis mine—my command——tell her so. I will be master of my own family, and I care not who knows it.

Mrs Str. You fright me, sir——But it shall be as you please. [*In tears.*] [*Goes out.*

Str. Ha! have I gone too far? I am not master of myself. Mrs Strictland, [*She returns*] understand me right: I do not mean, by what I have said, that I suspect your innocence, but, by crushing this growing friendship all at once, I may prevent a train of mischief which you do not foresee. I was, perhaps, too rash, therefore do it in your own way: but let me see the house fairly rid of her. [*Exit* STRICT.

Mrs Str. His earnestness in this affair amazes me; I am sorry I made this visit to Clarinda; and yet I'll answer for her honour. What can I say to her? Necessity must plead in my excuse—for at all events Mr Strictland must be obeyed.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*St James's Park.*

Enter BELLAMY *and* FRANKLY.

Frank. Now, Bellamy, I may unfold the secret of my heart to you with greater freedom; for though Ranger has honour, I am not in a humour to be laugh'd at. I must have one that will bear with my impertinence, sooth me into hope, and, like a friend indeed, with tenderness advise me.

Bel. I thought you appeared more grave than usual.

Frank. Oh, Bellamy! my soul is so full of joy, of pain, hope, despair, and ecstasy, that no word but love is capable of expressing what I feel.

Bel. Is love the secret Ranger is not fit to hear? In my mind, he would prove the more able counsellor. And is all the gay indifference of my friend at last reduced to love?

Frank. Even so. Never was a prude more resolute in chastity and ill-nature, than I was fixed in indifference: but love has raised me from that inactive state above the being of a man.

Bel. Faith, Charles, I begin to think it has: but pray bring this rapture into order a little, and tell me regularly, how, where, and when.

Frank. If I was not most unreasonably in love, those horrid questions would stop my mouth at once; but I am armed against reason—I answer—at Bath, on Tuesday, she danced and caught me.

Bel. Danced!——and was that all? But who is she? what is her name? her fortune? where does she live?

Frank. Hold! hold! not so many hard questions. Have a little mercy. I know but little of her, that's certain; but all I do know, you shall have. That evening was the first of her appearing at Bath; the moment I saw her, I resolved to ask the favour of her hand; but the easy freedom with which she gave it, and her unaffected good humour during the whole night, gained such a power over my heart, as none of her sex could ever boast before. I waited on her home, and the next morning, when I went to pay the usual compliments, the bird was flown; she had set out for London two hours before, and in a chariot and six, you rogue!

Bel. But was it her own, Charles?

Frank. That I don't know; but it looks better than being dragg'd to town in the stage. That day and the next I spent in inquiries. I waited on the ladies who came with her; they knew nothing of her. So, without learning either her name or fortune, I e'en call'd for my boots, and rode post after her.

Bel. And how do you find yourself after your journey?

Frank. Why, as yet, I own, I am but on a cold scent: but a woman of her sprightliness and gentility cannot but frequent all public places; and when once she is found, the pleasure of the chace will overpay the pains of rousing her. Oh, Bellamy! there was something peculiarly charming in her, that seemed to claim my further acquaintance; and if in the other more familiar parts of life she shines with that superior lustre, and at last I win her to my arms, how shall I bless my resolution in pursuing her!

Bel. But if at last she should prove unworthy—

Frank. I would endeavour to forget her.

Bel. Promise me that, Charles, [*Takes his hand.*] and I allow——But we are interrupted.

Enter JACK MEGGOT.

J. Meg. Whom have we here? My old friend Frankly! thou art grown a mere antique since I saw thee. How hast thou done these five hundred years?

Frank. Even as you see me; well, and at your service ever.

J. Meg. Ha! who's that?

Frank. A friend of mine. Mr Bellamy, this is Jack Meggot, sir, as honest a fellow as any in life.

J. Meg. Pho! pr'ythee! pox! Charles——Don't be silly——Sir, I am your humble; any one who is a friend of my Frankly's, I am proud of embracing.

Bel. Sir, I shall endeavour to deserve your civility.

J. Meg. Oh, sir!—Well, Charles; what, dumb? Come, come: you may talk, though you have nothing to say, as I do. Let us hear, where have you been?

Frank. Why, for this last week, Jack, I have been at Bath.

J. Meg. Bath! the most ridiculous place in life! amongst tradesmen's wives that hate their husbands, and people of quality that had rather go to the devil than stay at home. People of no taste; no *goust*; and for *divertimenti*, if it were not for the puppet-show, *la vertu* would be dead amongst them. But the news, Charles; the ladies—I fear your time hung heavy on your hands, by the small stay you made there.

Frank. Faith, and so it did, Jack; the ladies are grown such idiots in love, the cards have so debauched their five senses, that love, almighty love himself is utterly neglected.

J. Meg. It is the strangest thing in life, but it is just so with us abroad. Faith, Charles, to tell you a secret, which I don't care if all the world knows, I am almost surfeited with the services of the ladies; the modest ones I mean. The vast variety of duties they expect, as dressing up to the fashion, losing fashionably, keeping fashionable hours, drinking fashionable liquors, and fifty other such irregular niceties, so ruin a man's pocket and constitution, that 'foregad, he must have the estate of a duke, and the strength of a gondolier, who would list himself into their service.

Frank. A free confession truly, Jack, for one of your coat.

Bel. The ladies are obliged to you.

Enter BUCKLE, *with a letter to* BELLAMY.

J. Meg. Oh, Lard, Charles! I have had the greatest misfortune in life since I saw you; poor Otho, that I brought from Rome with me, is dead

Frank. Well, well, get you another, and all will be well again.

J. Meg. No; the rogue broke me so much china, and gnawed my Spanish leather shoes so filthily, that, when he was dead, I began not to endure him.

Bel. Exactly at seven! run back, and assure him I will not fail. [*Exit* BUCKLE.] Dead! Pray, who was the gentleman?

J. Meg. This gentleman was my monkey, sir; an odd sort of a fellow that used to divert me, and pleased every body so at Rome, that he always

made one in our *conversationi*. But, Mr Bellamy, I saw a servant, I hope no engagement, for you two positively shall dine with me: I have the finest *macaroni* in life. Oblige me so far.

Bel. Sir, your servant; what say you, Frankly?

J. Meg. Pho! pox! Charles, you shall go. My aunts think you begin to neglect them; and old maids, you know, are the most jealous creatures in life.

Frank. Ranger swears they cann't be maids, they are so good-natured. Well, I agree, on condition I may eat what I please, and go away just when I will.

J. Meg. Ay, ay, you shall do just what you will. But how shall we do? my post-chaise won't carry us all.

Frank. My chariot is here; and I will conduct Mr Bellamy.

Bel. Mr Meggot, I beg pardon; I cann't possibly dine out of town; I have an engagement early in the evening.

J. Meg. Out of town! No, my dear, I live just by. I see one of the dilletanti I would not miss speaking to for the universe. And so I expect you at three. [*Exit.*

Frank. Ha, ha, ha! and so you thought you had at least fifty miles to go post for a spoonful of macaroni.

Bel. I suppose then he is just come out of the country.

Frank. Nor that neither. I would venture a wager, from his own house hither, or to an auction or two of old dirty pictures, is the utmost of his travels to-day; or he may have been in pursuit, perhaps, of a new cargo of Venetian tooth-picks.

Bel. A special acquaintance I have made to-day.

Frank. For all this, Bellamy, he has a heart worthy your friendship. He spends his estate freely, and you cannot oblige him more, than by shewing him how he can be of service to you.

Bel. Now you say something. It is the heart, Frankly, I value in a man.

Frank. Right—and there is a heart even in a woman's breast that is worth the purchase, or my judgment has deceived me. Dear Bellamy, I know your concern for me; see her first, and then blame me if you can.

Bel. So far from blaming you, Charles, that if my endeavours can be serviceable, I will beat the bushes with you.

Frank. That, I am afraid, will not do. For you know less of her than I: but if in your walks you meet a finer woman than ordinary, let her not escape till I have seen her. Wheresoe'er she is, she cannot long lie hid. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*St James's Park.*

Enter CLARINDA, JACINTHA, *and Mrs* STRICTLAND.

Jac. Ay, ay, we both stand condemned out of our own mouths.

Cla. Why, I cannot but own, I never had a thought of any man that troubled me but him.

Mrs Str. Then I dare swear, by this time, you heartily repent your leaving Bath so soon.

Cla. Indeed you are mistaken, I have not had one scruple since.

Jac. Why, what one inducement can he have ever to think of you again?

Cla. Oh, the greatest of all inducements, curiosity: let me assure you, a woman's surest hold over a man is to keep him in uncertainty. As soon as ever you put him out of doubt, you put him out of your power: but when once a woman has awaked his curiosity, she may lead him a dance of many a troublesome mile, without the least fear of losing him at last.

Jac. Now do I heartily wish he may have spirit enough to follow, and use you as you deserve.—Such a spirit, with but a little knowledge of our sex, might put that heart of yours into a strange flutter.

Cla. I care not how soon. I long to meet with such a fellow. Our modern beaux are such joint babies in love, they have no feeling; they are entirely insensible either of pain or pleasure, but from their own dear persons; and accordingly as we flatter or affront their beauty, they admire or forsake ours: they are not worthy even of our displeasure; and, in short, abusing them is but so much ill-nature merely thrown away. But the man of sense, who values himself upon his high abilities; or the man of wit, who thinks a woman beneath his conversation—to see such the subjects of our power, the slaves of our frowns and smiles, is glorious indeed!

Mrs Str. No man of sense, or wit either, if he be truly so, ever did, or ever can, think a woman of merit beneath his wisdom to converse with.

Jac. Nor will such a woman value herself upon making such a lover uneasy.

Cla. Amazing! Why, every woman can give ease. You cannot be in earnest.

Mrs Str. I can assure you she is, and has put in practice the doctrine she has been teaching.

Cla. Impossible! Who ever heard the name of love mentioned without an idea of torment? But pray let us hear.

Jac. Nay, there is nothing to hear that I know of.

Cla. So I suspected, indeed. The novel is not likely to be long, when the lady is so well prepared for the denouement.

Jac. The novel, as you call it, is not so short as you may imagine. I and my spark have been long acquainted: as he was continually with my father, I soon perceived that he loved me; and the manner of his expressing that love was what pleased and won me most.

Cla. Well: and how was it? the old bait, flattery, dear flattery, I warrant ye.

Jac. No, indeed; I had not the pleasure of hearing my person, wit, and beauty painted out with forced praises; but I had a more sensible delight, in perceiving the drift of his whole behaviour was to make every hour of my time pass away agreeably.

Cla. The rustic! what, did he never say a handsome thing of your person?

Mrs Str. He did, it seems, what pleased her better; he flattered her good sense, as much as a less cunning lover would have done her beauty.

Cla. On my conscience you are well matched.

Jac. So well, that if my guardian denies me happiness (and this evening he is to pass his final sentence,) nothing is left but to break my prison, and fly into my lover's arms for safety.

Cla. Hey-day! O' my conscience thou art a brave girl. Thou art the very first prude that ever had honesty enough to avow her passion for a man.

Jac. And thou art the first finished coquette who ever had any honesty at all.

Mrs Str. Come, come; you are both too good for either of those characters.

Cla. And my dear Mrs Strictland here is the first young married woman of spirit who has an ill-natured fellow for a husband, and never once thinks of using him as he deserves—Good Heaven! If I had such a husband——

Mrs Str. You would be just as unhappy as I am!

Cla. But come now, confess—do not you long to be a widow?

Mrs Str. Would I were anything but what I am.

Cla. Then go the nearest way about it. I'd break that stout heart of his in less than a fortnight. I'd make him know——

Mrs Str. Pray be silent. You know my resolution.

Cla. I know you have no resolution.

Mrs Str. You are a mad creature, but I forgive you.

Cla. It is all meant kindly, I assure you. But since you won't be persuaded to your good, I will think of making you easy in your submission as soon as ever I can. I dare say, I may have the same lodging I had last year: I can know immediately—I see my chair: and so, ladies, both adieu, [*Exit.*

Jac. Come, Mrs Strictland, we shall but just have time to get home before Mr Bellamy comes.

Mrs Str. Let us return then to our common prison. You must forgive my ill-nature, Jacintha, if I almost wish Mr Strictland may refuse to join your hand where your heart is given.

Jac. Lord, madam, what do you mean?

Mrs Str. Self-interest only, child. Methinks your company in the country would soften all my sorrows, and I could bear them patiently.

Re-enter CLARINDA.

Cla. Dear Mrs Strictland—I am so confused, and so out of breath——

Mrs Str. Why, what's the matter?

Jac. I protest you fright me.

Cla. Oh! I have no time to recover myself, I am so frightened, and so pleased. In short then, the dear man is here.

Mrs Str. Here——Lord!——Where?

Cla. I met him this instant; I saw him at a distance, turned short, and ran hither directly. Let us go home.—I tell you he follows me.

Mrs Str. Why, had you not better stay, and let him speak to you?

Cla. Ay!—But then—he won't know where I live, without my telling him.

Mrs Str. Come then. Ha, ha, ha!

Jac. Ay, poor Clarinda!—*Allons donc.* [*Exeunt.*

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. Sure that must be she! her shape and easy air cannot be so exactly copied by another. Now, you young rogue, Cupid, guide me directly to her, as you would the surest arrow in your quiver. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to the Street before Mr* STRICTLAND'S *door.*

Re-enter CLARINDA, JACINTHA, *and Mrs* STRICTLAND.

Cla. Lord!—Dear Jacintha—for Heaven's sake make haste: he'll overtake us before we get in.

Jac. Overtake us! why, he is not in sight.

Cla. Is not he? Ha! sure I have not dropt my twee—I would not have him lose sight of me neither. [*Aside.*

Mrs Str. Here he is——

Cla. In—in—in then.

Jac. [*Laughing.*] What, without your twee?

Cla. Psha! I have lost nothing——In, in, I'll follow you.

[*Exeunt into the house,* CLARINDA *last.*

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. It is impossible I should be deceived. My eyes, and the quick pulses at the heart, assure me it is she. Ha! 'tis she, by Heaven! and the door left open too—A fair invitation, by all the rules of love. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to an Apartment in Mr* STRICTLAND'S *House.*

Enter CLARINDA, FRANKLY *following her.*

Frank. I hope, madam, you will excuse the boldness of this intrusion, since it is owing to your own behaviour that I am forced to it.

Cla. To my behaviour, sir?

Frank. You cannot but remember me at Bath, madam, where I so lately had the favour of your hand—

Cla. I do remember, sir, but I little expected any wrong interpretation of my behaviour from one who had so much the appearance of a gentleman.

Frank. What I saw of your behaviour was so just, it would admit of no misrepresentation. I only feared, whatever reason you had to conceal your name from me at Bath, you might have the same to do it now; and though my happiness was

so nearly concerned, I rather chose to venture thus abruptly after you, than be impertinently inquisitive.

Cla. Sir, there seems to be so much civility in your rudeness, that I can easily forgive it, though I don't see how your happiness is at all concerned.

Frank. No, madam! I believe you are the only lady, who could, with the qualifications you are mistress of, be insensible of the power they give you over the happiness of our sex.

Cla. How vain should we women be, if you gentlemen were but wise! If you did not all of you say the same things to every woman, we should certainly be foolish enough to believe some of you were in earnest.

Frank. Could you have the least sense of what I feel whilst I am speaking, you would know me to be in earnest, and what I say to be the dictates of a heart that admires you; may I not say that—

Cla. Sir, this is carrying the—

Frank. When I danced with you at Bath, I was charmed with your whole behaviour, and felt the same tender admiration! but my hope of seeing you afterwards, kept in my passion till a more proper time should offer. You cannot therefore blame me now, if, after having lost you once, I do not suffer an inexcusable modesty to prevent my making use of this second opportunity.

Cla. This behaviour, sir, is so different from the gaiety of your conversation then, that I am at a loss how to answer you.

Frank. There is nothing, madam, which could take off from the gaiety with which your presence inspires every heart, but the fear of losing you. How can I be otherwise than as I am, when I know not but you may leave London as abruptly as you did Bath?

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. Madam, the tea is ready, and my mistress waits for you.

Cla. Very well, I come—[*Exit* LUCETTA.] You see, sir, I am called away: but I hope you will excuse it, when I leave you with an assurance that the business, which brings me to town, will keep me here some time.

Frank. How generous it is in you thus to ease the heart that knew not how to ask for such a favour—I fear to offend—But this house, I suppose, is your's?

Cla. You will hear of me, if not find me here.

Frank. I then take my leave. [*Exit.*

Cla. I'm undone!—He has me!

Enter Mrs STRICTLAND.

Mrs Str. Well; how do you find yourself?

Cla. I do find—that, if he goes on as he has begun, I shall certainly have him without giving him the least uneasiness.

Mrs Str. A very terrible prospect, indeed!

Cla. But I must tease him a little——Where is Jacintha? how will she laugh at me, if I become a pupil of hers, and learn to give ease! No; positively I shall never do it.

Mrs Str. Poor Jacintha has met with what I feared from Mr Strictland's temper; an utter denial. I know not why, but he really grows more and more ill-natured.

Cla. Well; now do I heartily wish my affairs were in his power a little, that I might have a few difficulties to surmount: I love difficulties; and yet, I don't know—it is as well as it is.

Mrs Str. Ha, ha, ha! Come, the tea waits.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Mr STRICTLAND.

Str. These doings in my house distract me. I met a fine gentleman: when I enquired who he was, why, he came to Clarinda. I met a footman too, and he came to Clarinda. I shall not be easy till she is decamped. My wife had the character of a virtuous woman——and they have not been long acquainted: but then they were by themselves at Bath—That hurts—that hurts—they must be watched, they must; I know them, I know all their wiles, and the best of them are but hypocrites—Ha!—[LUCETTA *passes over the stage.*] Suppose I bribe the maid? she is of their council, the manager of their secrets; it shall be so; money will do it, and I shall know all that passes. Lucetta!

Luc. Sir.

Str. Lucetta!

Re-enter LUCETTA.

Luc. Sir.—If he should suspect, and search me now, I'm undone. [*Aside.*

Str. She is a sly girl, and may be serviceable. [*Aside.*] Lucetta, you are a good girl, and have an honest face. I like it. It looks as if it carried no deceit in it—Yet, if she should be false, she can do me most harm. [*Aside.*

Luc. Pray, sir, speak out.

Str. [*Aside.*] No, she is a woman, and it is the highest imprudence to trust her.

Luc. I am not able to understand you.

Str. I am glad of it. I would not have you understand me.

Luc. Then what did you call me for?—If he should be in love with my face, it would be rare sport. [*Aside.*

Str. Tester, ay, Tester is the proper person. [*Aside.*] Lucetta, tell Tester I want him.

Luc. Yes, sir. Mighty odd, this! It gives me time, however, to send Buckle with this letter to his master. [*Aside. Exit.*

Str. Could I but be once well satisfied that my wife had really finished me, I believe I should be as quiet as if I were sure to the contrary: but whilst I am in doubt, I am miserable.

Enter TESTER.

Test. Does your honour please to want me?

Str. Ay, Tester—I need not fear. The honesty of his service, and the goodness of his look, make me secure. I will trust him. [*Aside.*] Tester, I think I have been a tolerable good master to you.

Test. Yes, sir,—very tolerable.

Str. I like his simplicity well. It promises

honesty. [*Aside.*] I have a secret, Tester, to impart to you; a thing of the greatest importance. Look upon me, and don't stand picking your fingers.

Test. Yes, sir.—No, sir.

Str. But will not his simplicity expose him the more to Lucetta's cunning? Yes, yes; she will worm the secret out of him. I had better trust her with it at once. So—I will. [*Aside.*] Tester, go, send Lucetta hither.

Test. Yes, sir.——Here she is.

Re-enter LUCETTA.

Lucetta, my master wants you.

Str. Get you down, Tester.

Test. Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

Luc. If you want me, sir, I beg you would make haste, for I have a thousand things to do.

Str. Well, well; what I have to say will not take up much time, could I but persuade you to be honest.

Luc. Why, sir, I hope you don't suspect my honesty?

Str. Well, well; I believe you honest.

[*Shuts the door.*

Luc. What can be at the bottom of all this? [*Aside.*

Str. So; we cannot be too private. Come hither, hussy; nearer yet.

Luc. Lord, sir! You are not going to be rude. I vow I will call out.

Str. Hold your tongue——Does the baggage laugh at me? She does; she mocks me, and will reveal it to my wife; and her insolence upon it will be more insupportable to me than cuckoldom itself. [*Aside.*] I have not leisure now, Lucetta—Some other time—Hush! Did not the bell ring? Yes, yes; my wife wants you. Go, go, go to her. [*Pushes her out.*] There is no hell on earth like being a slave to suspicion. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*The Piazza, Covent Garden.*

Enter BELLAMY *and* JACK MEGGOT.

Bel. Nay, nay, I would not put your family into any confusion.

J. Meg. None in life, my dear, I assure you. I will go and order every thing this instant for her reception.

Bel. You are too obliging, sir; but you need not be in this hurry, for I am in no certainty when I shall trouble you; I only know that my Jacintha has taken such a resolution.

J. Meg. Therefore we should be prepared; for when once a lady has such a resolution in her head, she is upon the rack till she executes it. 'Foregad, Mr Bellamy, this must be a girl of fire.

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. Buxom and lively as the bounding doe —Fair as painting can express, or youthful poets fancy when they love—Tol, de rol, lol!

[*Singing and dancing.*

Bel. Who is this you talk thus rapturously of?

Frank. Who should it be, but——I shall know her name to-morrow, [*Sings and dances.*

J. Meg. What is the matter, ho? Is the man mad?

Frank. Even so, gentlemen; as mad as love and joy can make me.

Bel. But inform us whence this joy proceeds.

Frank. Joy! joy! my lads! She's found! my Perdita! my charmer!

J. Meg. 'Egad! her charms have bewitch'd the man, I think——But who is she?

Bel. Come, come, tell us, who is this wonder?

Frank. But will you say nothing?

Bel. Nothing, as I live.

Frank. Nor you?

J. Meg. I'll be as silent as the grave——

Frank. With a tomb-stone upon it, to tell every one whose dust it carries.

J. Meg. I'll be as secret as a debauched prude—

Frank. Whose sanctity every one suspects.—Jack, Jack, 'tis not in thy nature; keeping a secret is worse to thee than keeping thy accounts. But, to leave fooling, listen to me both, that I may whisper it into your ears, that echo may not catch the sinking sound——I cannot tell who she is, faith—Tol de rol, lol——

J. Meg. Mad! mad! very mad!

Frank. All I know of her is, that she is a charming woman, and has given me liberty to visit her again—Bellamy, 'tis she, the lovely she. [*Aside.*

Bel. So I did suppose. [*To* FRANKLY.

J. Meg. Poor Charles! for Heaven's sake, Mr Bellamy, persuade him to go to his chamber, whilst I prepare every thing for you at home. Adieu. [*Aside to* BELLAMY.] B'ye Charles; ha, ha, ha! [*Exit.*

Frank. Oh, love! thou art a gift worthy of a god, indeed! Dear Bellamy, nothing now could add to my pleasure, but to see my friend as deep in love as I am.

Bel. I shew my heart is capable of love, by the friendship it bears to you.

Frank. The light of friendship looks but dim before the brighter flame of love: love is the spring of cheerfulness and joy. Why, how dull and phlegmatic do you shew to me now? whilst I am all life, light as feather'd Mercury—You, dull and cold as earth and water; I, light and warm as air and fire. These are the only elements in love's world! Why, Bellamy, for shame! get thee a mistress, and be sociable.

Bel. Frankly, I am now going to——

Frank. Why that face now? Your humble servant, sir. My flood of joy shall not be stopp'd by your melancholy fits, I assure you. [*Going.*

Bel. Stay, Frankly, I beg you stay. What would you say now if I really were in love?

Frank. Why, faith, thou hast such romantic notions of sense and honour, that I know not what to say.

Bel. To confess the truth then, I am in love.

Frank. And do you confess it as if it were a sin? Proclaim it aloud; glory in it; boast of it as your greatest virtue. Swear it with a lover's oath, and I will believe you.

Bel. Why then, by the bright eyes of her I love—

Frank. Well said!

Bel. By all that's tender, amiable, and soft in woman——

Frank. Bravo!

Bel. I swear, I am as true an enamorato as ever tagg'd rhyme.

Frank. And art thou then thoroughly in love? Come to my arms thou dear companion of my joys—— [*They embrace.*

Enter RANGER.

Ran. Why—Hey! is there never a wench to be got for love or money?

Bel. Pshaw! Ranger here?

Ran. Yes. Ranger is here, and perhaps does not come so impertinently as you may imagine. Faith! I think I have the knack of finding out secrets. Nay, never look so queer—Here is a letter, Mr Bellamy, that seems to promise you better diversion than your hugging one another.

Bel. What do you mean?

Ran. Do you deal much in these paper tokens?

Bel. Oh, the dear kind creature; it is from herself. [*To* FRANKLY.

Ran. What, is it a pair of laced shoes she wants? or have the boys broke her windows?

Bel. Hold your profane tongue!

Frank. Nay, pr'ythee, Bellamy, don't keep it to yourself, as if her whole affections were contained in those few lines.

Ran. Pr'ythee, let him alone to his silent raptures. But it is as I always said—your grave men ever are the greatest whoremasters.

Bel. I cannot be disobliged now, say what you will. But how came this into your hands?

Ran. Your servant Buckle and I changed commissions; he went on my errand, and I came on his.

Bel. 'Sdeath! I want him this very instant.

Ran. He will be here presently: but I demand to know what I have brought you.

Frank. Ay, ay! out with it! you know we never blab, and may be of service.

Bel Twelve o'clock! oh, the dear hour!

Ran. Why, it is a pretty convenient time, indeed.

Bel. By all that's happy, she promises in this letter here—to leave her guardian this very night—and run away with me.

Ran. How is this?

Bel. Nay, I know not how myself—she says at the bottom—"Your servant has full instructions from Lucetta how to equip me for my expedition. I will not trust myself home with you to-night, because I know it is inconvenient; therefore I beg you would procure me a lodging, it is no matter how far off my guardian's——

Yours, JACINTHA."

Ran. Carry her to a bagnio, and there you may lodge with her.

Frank. Why, this must be a girl of spirit, faith!

Bel. And beauty equal to her sprightliness. I love her, and she loves me. She has thirty thousand pounds to her fortune.

Ran. The devil she has!

Bel. And never plays at cards.

Ran. Nor does any one thing like any other woman, I suppose.

Frank. Not so, I hope, neither.

Bel. Oh, Frankly, Ranger, I never felt such ease before! the secret's out, and you don't laugh at me.

Frank. Laugh at thee, for loving a woman with thirty thousand pounds! thou art a most unaccountable fellow.

Ran. How the devil could he work her up to this! I never could have had the face to have done it. But——I know not how—there is a degree of assurance in you modest gentlemen, which we impudent fellows never can come up to.

Bel. Oh! your servant, good sir. You should not abuse me now, Ranger, but do all you can to assist me.

Ran. Why, look ye, Bellamy, I am a damnable unlucky fellow, and so will have nothing to do in this affair: I'll take care to be out of the way, so as to do you no harm; that's all I can answer for; and so—success attend you. [*Going.*] I cannot leave you quite to yourself neither; for if this should prove a round-house affair, as I make no doubt it will, I believe I may have more interest there than you; and so, sir, you may hear of me at—— [*Whispers.*

Bel. For shame, Ranger: the most noted gaming-house in town.

Ran. Forgive me this once, my boy. I must go, faith, to pay a debt of honour to some of the greatest rascals in town. [*Exit.*

Frank. But where do you design to lodge her?

Bel. At Mr Meggot's——He is already gone to prepare for her reception.

Frank. The properest place in the world: his aunts will entertain her with honour.

Bel. And the newness of his acquaintance will prevent its being suspected.—Frankly, give me your hand: this is a very critical time.

Frank. Pho! none of your musty reflections now! When a man is in love, to the very brink of matrimony, what the devil has he to do with Plutarch and Seneca? Here is your servant, with a face full of business—I'll leave you together—— I shall be at the King's Arms, where, if you want my assistance, you may find me. [*Exit.*

Enter BUCKLE.

Bel. So, Buckle, you seem to have your hands full.

Buc. Not fuller than my head, sir, I promise you. You have had your letter, I hope.

Bel. Yes, and in it she refers me to you for my instructions.

Buc. Why the affair stands thus.—As Mr Strictland sees the door lock'd and barred every night himself, and takes the key up with him, it is impossible for us to escape any way but through the window; for which purpose I have a ladder of ropes.

Bel. Good.—

Buc. And because a hoop, as the ladies wear them now, is not the most decent dress to come down a ladder in, I have, in this other bundle, a suit of boy's clothes, which I believe will fit her; at least, it will serve the time she wants it.—— You will soon be for pulling it off, I suppose.

Bel. Why, you are in spirits, you rogue.

Buc. These I am now to convey to Lucetta.— Have you any thing to say, sir?

Bel. Nothing, but that I will not fail at the hour appointed. Bring me word to Mr Meggot's how you go on. Succeed in this, and it shall make your fortune. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Street before* Mr STRICTLAND'S *House.*

Enter BELLAMY *in a Chairman's coat.*

Bel. How tediously have the minutes pass'd these last few hours! and the envious rogues will fly, no lightning quicker, when we would have them stay. Hold, let me not mistake—this is the house. [*Pulls out his watch.*] By heaven it is not yet the hour!—I hear somebody coming. The moon's so bright—I had better not be here till the happy instant comes. [*Exit.*

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. Wine is no antidote to love, but rather feeds the flame: Now am I such an amorous puppy, that I cannot walk straight home, but must come out of my way to take a view of my queen's palace by moonlight——Ay, here stands the temple where my goddess is adored—the doors open! [*Retires.*

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. [*Under the window.*] Madam, madam, hist! madam——How shall I make her hear?

JACINTHA *in Boy's clothes at the window.*

Jac. Who is there? What's the matter?

Luc. It is I, madam; you must not pretend to stir till I give the word; you'll be discovered if you do—

Frank. [*Aside.*] What do I see? A man! My heart misgives me.

Luc. My master is below, sitting up for Mrs Clarinda. He raves as if he were mad about her being out so late.

Frank. [*Aside.*] Here is some intrigue or other. I must see more of this before I give further way to love.

Luc. One minute he is in the street; the next he is in the kitchen: now he will lock her out, and then he'll wait himself, and see what figure she makes when she vouchsafes to venture home.

Jac. I long to have it over. Get me but once out of his house.

Frank. [*Aside.*] Cowardly rascal! would I were in his place.

Luc. If I can but fix him any where, I can let you out myself——You have the ladder ready in case of necessity.

Jac. Yes, yes. [*Exit* LUC.

Frank. [*Aside.*] The ladder! This must lead to some discovery; I shall watch you, my young gentleman, I shall.

Enter CLARINDA *and a Servant.*

Cla. This whist is a most enticing devil. I am afraid I'm too late for Mr Strictland's sober hours.

Jac. Ha! I hear a noise!

Cla. No; I see a light in Jacintha's window. You may go home. [*Giving the servant money.*] I am safe.

Jac. Sure it must be he! Mr Bellamy—Sir.

Frank. [*Aside.*] Does he not call me?

Cla. [*Aside.*] Ha! Who's that? I am frightened out of my wits——A man!

Jac. Is it you?

Frank. Yes, yes; 'tis I, 'tis I.

Jac. Listen at the door.

Frank. I will; 'tis open——There is no noise: all's quiet.

Cla. Sure it is my spark—and talking to Jacintha. [*Aside.*

Frank. You may come down the ladder—quick.

Jac. Catch it then, and hold it.

Frank. I have it. Now I shall see what sort of mettle my young spark is made of. [*Aside.*

Cla. With a ladder too! I'll assure you. But I must see the end of it. [*Aside.*

Jac. Hark! Did not somebody speak?

Frank. No, no; be not fearful—'Sdeath! we are discover'd. [FRANKLY *and* CLARINDA *retire.*

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. Hist! hist! are you ready?

Jac. Yes, may I venture?

Luc. Now is your time. He is in high conference with his privy counsellor, Mr Tester. You may come down the backstairs, and I'll let you out. [*Exit* LUCETTA.

Jac. I will, I will, and am heartily glad of it. [*Exit* JAC.

Frank. [*Advancing.*] May be so; but you and I shall have a few words before you get off so cleanly.

Cla. [*Advancing.*] How lucky it was I came home at this instant! I shall spoil his sport I believe. Do you know me, sir?

Frank. I am amazed! You here! This was unexpected indeed!

Cla. Why, I believe, I do come a little unexpectedly, but I shall amaze you more. I know the

whole course of your amour: all the process of your mighty passion from its first rise——

Frank. What is all this?

Cla. To the very conclusion, which you vainly hope to effect this night.

Frank. By heaven, madam, I know not what you mean; I came hither purely to contemplate on your beauties.

Cla. Any beauties, sir, I find, will serve your turn. Did I not hear you talk to her at the window?

Frank. Her!

Cla. Blush, blush, for shame; but be assured you have seen the last both of Jacintha and me. [*Exit.*

Frank. Jacintha! hear me, madam.—She is gone. This must certainly be Bellamy's mistress, and I have fairly ruin'd all his scheme. This it is to be in luck.

Enter BELLAMY, *behind.*

Bel. Ha! a man under the window!

Frank. No, here she comes, and I may convey her to him.

Enter JACINTHA, *and runs to* FRANKLY.

Jac. I have at last got to you. Let's haste away—Oh!

Frank. Be not frightened, lady.

Jac. Oh! am I abused? betray'd?

Frank. Bellamy!

Bel. I can scarce believe it though I see it. Draw—

Frank. Hear me, Bellamy——Lady——

Jac. Stay——do not fight!

Frank. I am innocent; it is all a mistake!

Jac. For my sake, be quiet! We shall be discovered! the family is alarmed!

Bel. You are obeyed. Mr Frankly, there is but one way——

Frank. I understand you. Any time but now. You will certainly be discovered! To-morrow at your chambers.

Bel. Till then farewell. [*Exeunt* BEL. *and* JAC.

Frank. Then, when he is cool, I may be heard; and the real, though suspicious, account of this matter may be believed. Yet, amidst all this perplexity, it pleases me to find my fair incognita is jealous of my love.

Str. [*Within.*] Where's Lucetta? Search every place.

Frank. Hark! the cry is up! I must be gone. [*Exit* FRANK.

Enter Mr STRICTLAND, TESTER, *and Servants.*

Str. She's gone! she's lost! I am cheated! pursue her! seek her!

Test. Sir, all her clothes are in her chamber.

Ser. Sir, Mrs Clarinda said she was in boy's clothes.

Str. Ay, ay, I know it!—Bellamy has her—Come along—pursue her. [*Exeunt.*

Enter RANGER.

Ran. Hark!——Was not the noise this way——No, there is no game stirring. This same goddess, Diana, shines so bright with her chastity, that, egad, I believe the wenches are ashamed to look her in the face. Now am I in an admirable mood for a frolic: have wine in my head, and money in my pocket, and so am furnished out for the cannonading of any countess in Christendom. Ha! what have we here? a ladder!—this cannot be placed here for nothing——and a window open! Is it love or mischief now that is going on within? I care not which—I am in a right cue for either. Up I go, neck or nothing. Stay, do I not run a greater chance of spoiling sport than I do of making any? that I hate as much as I love the other. There can be no harm in seeing how the land lies—I'll up [*Goes up softly.*] All is hush——Ha! a light, and a woman! by all that's lucky, neither old nor crooked! I'll in——Ha! she is gone again! I will after her. [*Gets in at the window.*] And for fear of the squalls of virtue, and the pursuit of the family, I will make sure of the ladder. Now, Fortune, be my guide! [*Goes in.*

SCENE II.—*Mrs* STRICTLAND'S *Dressing-Room.*

Enter Mrs STRICTLAND, *followed by* LUCETTA.

Mrs Str. Well, I am in great hopes she will escape.

Luc. Never fear, madam, the lovers have the start of him, and I warrant they keep it.

Mrs Str. Were Mr Strictland ever to suspect my being privy to her flight, I know not what might be the consequence.

Luc. Then you had better be undressing. He may return immediately.

[*As she is sitting down at the toilet,* RANGER *enters behind.*

Ran. Young and beautiful. [*Aside.*

Luc. I have watch'd him pretty narrowly of late, and never once suspected till this morning—

Mrs Str. And who gave you authority to watch his actions, or pry into his secrets?

Luc. I hope, madam, you are not angry. I thought it might have been of service to you to know my master was jealous.

Ran. And her husband jealous! if she does but send away the maid I am happy.

Mrs Str. [*Within.*] Leave me.

Luc. This it is to meddle with other people's affairs. [*Exit in anger.*

Ran. What a lucky dog I am! I never made a gentleman a cuckold before. Now, impudence assist me!

Mrs Str. [*Rising.*] Provoking! I am sure I never have deserved it of him.

Ran. Oh, cuckold him by all means, madam, I am your man! [*She shrieks.*] Oh, fie, madam! if you squall so cursedly you will be discover'd.

Mrs Str. Discovered! What mean you, sir! do you come to abuse me?

Ran. I'll do my endeavour, madam, you can have no more.

Mrs Str. Whence came you? how got you here?

Ran. Dear madam, so long as I am here, what

signifies how I got here, or whence I came? but that I may satisfy your curiosity, first, as to your whence came you? I answer, out of the street: and to your how got you here? I say, in at the window; it stood so invitingly open, it was irresistible. But, madam——you were going to undress. I beg I may not incommode you.

Mrs Str. This is the most consummate piece of impudence——

Ran. For heaven's sake have one drop of pity for a poor young fellow who long has loved you.

Mrs Str. What would the fellow have?

Ran. Your husband's usage will excuse you to the world.

Mrs Str. I cannot bear this insolence! help! help!

Ran. Oh, hold that clamorous tongue, madam! Speak one word more, and I am gone, positively gone.

Mrs Str. Gone! so I would have you.

Ran. Lord, madam, you are so hasty!

Mrs. Str. Shall I not speak, when a thief, robber, breaks into my house at midnight? Help! help!

Ran. Ha! no one hears. Now, Cupid, assist me —Look ye, madam, I never could make fine speeches, and cringe, and bow, and fawn, and flatter, and lie! I have said more to you already, than ever I said to a woman in such circumstances in all my life. But since I find you will yield to no persuasion to your good, I will gently force you to be grateful. [*Throws down his hat, and seizes her.*] Come, come, unbend that brow, and look more kindly on me!

Mrs Str. For shame, sir! thus on my knees let me beg for mercy. [*Kneeling.*

Ran. And thus on mine let me beg the same.

[*He kneels, catches, and kisses her.*

Str. [*Within.*] Take away her sword! she'll hurt herself.

Mrs Str. Oh, Heavens! that's my husband's voice!

Ran. [*Rising.*] The devil it is!

Str. [*Within.*] Take away her sword, I say, and then I can close with her.

Mrs Str. He is upon the stairs, now coming up! I am undone if he sees you.

Ran. Pox on him, I must decamp then. Which way?

Mrs Str. Through this passage into the next chamber.

Ran. And so into the street. With all my heart. You may be perfectly easy, madam: mum's the word; I never blab. [*Aside.*] I shall not leave off so, but wait till the last moment.

[*Exit* RANGER.

Mrs Str. So, he's gone. What could I have said, if he had been discovered!

Enter Mr STRICTLAND *driving in* JACINTHA, LUCETTA *following.*

Str. Once more, my pretty masculine madam, you are welcome home; and I hope to keep you somewhat closer than I have done; for tomorrow morning, eight o'clock is the latest hour you shall stay in this lewd town.

Jac. Oh, sir; when once a girl is equipp'd with a hearty resolution, it is not your worship's sagacity, nor the great chain at your gate, can hinder her from doing what she has a mind.

Str. Oh, Lord! Lord! how this love improves a young lady's modesty!

Jac. Am I to blame to seek for happiness any where, when you are resolved to make me miserable here?

Str. I have this night prevented you making yourself so; and I will endeavour to do it for the future. I have you safe now, and the devil shall not get you out of my clutches again. I have lock'd the doors and barred them, I warrant you. So here, [*Giving her a candle.*] troop to your chamber, and to bed, whilst you are well. Go! [*He treads on* RANGER'S *hat.*] What's here? a hat! a man's hat in my wife's dressing room.

[*Looking at the hat.*

Mrs Str. What shall I do? [*Aside.*

Str. [*Taking up the hat, and looking at Mrs* STRICTLAND.] Ha! by hell, I see 'tis true!

Mrs Str. My fears confound me. I dare not tell the truth, and know not how to frame a lie!

[*Aside.*

Str. Mrs Strictland, Mrs Strictland, how came this hat into your chamber?

Luc. Are you that way disposed, my fine lady, and will not trust me? [*Aside.*

Str. Speak, wretch, speak——

Jac. I could not have suspected this. [*Aside.*

Str. Why dost thou not speak?

Mrs Str. Sir——

Str. Guilt—'tis guilt that ties your tongue!

Luc. I must bring her off, however. No chambermaid can help it. [*Aside.*

Str. My fears are just, and I am miserable——Thou worst of women!

Mrs Str. I know my innocence, and can bear this no longer.

Str. I know you are false, and 'tis I who will bear my injuries no longer.

[*Both walk about in a passion.*

Luc. [*To* JACINTHA, *aside.*] Is not the hat yours? own it, madam.

[*Takes away* JACINTHA'S *hat, and exit.*

Mrs Str. What ground, what cause have you for jealousy, when you yourself can witness, your leaving me was accidental, your return uncertain; and expected even sooner than it happen'd? The abuse is gross and palpable.

Str. Why this is true!

Mrs Str Indeed, Jacintha, I am innocent.

Str. And yet this hat must belong to somebody.

Jac. Dear Mrs Strictland, be not concerned. When he has diverted himself a little longer with it——

Str. Ha!

Jac. I suppose he will give me my hat again.

Str. Your hat!

Jac. Yes, my hat. You brush'd it from my side yourself, and then trod upon it; whether on pur-

pose to abuse this lady or no, you best know yourself.

Str. It cannot be—'tis all a lie.

Jac. Believe so still, with all my heart; but the hat is mine. Now, sir, who does it belong to?

[*Snatches it, and puts it on.*

Str. Why did she look so?

Jac. Your violence of temper is too much for her. You use her ill, and then suspect her for that confusion which you yourself occasion.

Str. Why did not you set me right at first?

Jac. Your hard usage of me, sir, is a sufficient reason why I should not be much concerned to undeceive you at all. 'Tis for my lady's sake I do it now; who deserves much better of you than to be thus exposed for every slight suspicion. See where she sits—Go to her.

Mrs Str. [*Rising.*] Indeed, Mr Strictland, I have a soul as much above——

Str. Whew! Now you have both found your tongues, and I must bear with their eternal rattle.

Jac. For shame, sir, go to her, and——

Str. Well, well, what shall I say? I forgive—— all is over. I, I, I forgive.

Mrs Str. Forgive! What do you mean?

Jac. Forgive her! is that all? Consider, sir—

Str. Hold, hold your confounded tongues, and I'll do any thing. I'll ask pardon—or forgive—or any thing. Good now, be quiet—I ask your pardon—there—[*Kisses her.*] For you, madam, I am infinitely obliged to you, and I could find in my heart to make you a return in kind, by marrying you to a beggar, but I have more conscience. Come, come, to your chamber. Here, take this candle.

Enter LUCETTA *pertly.*

Luc. Sir, if you please, I will light my young lady to bed.

Str. No, no! no such thing, good madam. She shall have nothing but her pillow to consult this night, I assure you. So, in, in. [*The ladies take leave. Exit* JAC.] Good night, kind madam.

Luc. Pox of the jealous fool! we might both have escaped out of the window purely. [*Aside.*

Str. Go, get you down; and, do you here, order the coach to be ready in the morning at eight, exactly. [*Exit* LUCETTA.] So, she is safe till to-morrow, and then for the country; and when she is there, I can manage as I think fit.

Mrs Str. Dear Mr Strictland——

Str. I am not in a humour, Mrs Strictland, fit to talk with you. Go to bed. I will endeavour to get the better of my temper, if I can; I'll follow you. [*Exit Mrs* STR.] How despicable have I made myself! [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Another Chamber.*

Enter RANGER.

Ran. All seems hush'd again, and I may venture out. I may as well sneak off whilst I am in a whole skin. And shall so much love and claret as I am in possession of only lull me to sleep, when it might so much better keep me waking? Forbid it fortune, and forbid it love. This is a chamber, perhaps of some bewitching female, and I may yet be happy. Ha! a light! the door opens. A boy! pox on him. [*He retires.*

Enter JACINTHA *with a candle.*

Jac. I have been listening at the door, and, from their silence, I conclude they are peaceably gone to bed together.

Ran. A pretty boy, faith; he seems uneasy. [*Aside.*

Jac. [*Sitting down.*] What an unlucky night has this proved to me! Every circumstance has fallen out unhappily.

Ran. He talks aloud. I'll listen. [*Aside.*

Jac. But what most amazes me is, that Clarinda should betray me!

Ran. Clarinda! she must be a woman. Well, what of her?

Jac. My guardian else would never have suspected my disguise.

Ran. Disguise! Ha, it must be so! What eyes she has! what a dull rogue was I not to suspect this sooner! [*Aside.*

Jac. Ha, I had forgot; the ladder is at the window still, and I will boldly venture by myself. [*Rising briskly, sees* RANGER.] Ha! a man, and well drest! Ha, Mrs Strictland! are you then at last dishonest!

Ran. By all my wishes she is a charming woman! lucky rascal! [*Aside.*

Jac. But I will, if possible, conceal her shame, and stand the brunt of his impertinence.

Ran. What shall I say to her! No matter; any thing soft will do the business. [*Aside.*

Jac. Who are you?

Ran. A man, young gentleman.

Jac. And what would you have?

Ran. A woman.

Jac. You are very free, sir. Here are none for you.

Ran. Ay, but there is one, and a fair one too; the most charming creature nature ever set her hand to; and you are the dear little pilot that must direct me to her heart.

Jac. What mean you, sir? It is an office I am not accustomed to.

Ran. You won't have far to go, however. I never make my errands tedious. It is to your own heart, dear madam, I would have you whisper in my behalf. Nay, never start. Think you such beauty could ever be concealed from eyes so well acquainted with its charms?

Jac. What will become of me! If I cry out, Mrs Strictland is undone. This is my last resort. [*Aside.*

Ran. Pardon, dear lady, the boldness of this visit, which your guardian's care has forced me to: but I long have loved you, long have doated on that beauteous face, and followed you from place to place, though perhaps unknown and unregarded.

Jac. Here's a special fellow! [*Aside.*

Ran. Turn then an eye of pity on my suffer-

ings; and, by Heaven, one tender look from those piercing eyes, one touch of this soft hand——

[*Going to take her hand.*

Jac. Hold, sir, no nearer.

Ran. Would more than repay whole years of pain.

Jac. Hear me; but keep your distance, or I raise the family.

Ran. Blessings on her tongue, only for prattling to me! [*Aside*

Jac. Oh, for a moment's courage, and I shall shame him from his purpose. [*Aside.*] If I were certain so much gallantry had been shewn on my account only——

Ran. You wrong your beauty to think that any other could have power to draw me hither. By all the little loves that play about your lips, I swear——

Jac. You came to me, and me alone?

Ran. By all the thousand graces that inhabit there, you, and only you, have drawn me hither.

Jac. Well said——Could I but believe you—

Ran. By Heaven she comes! Ah, honest Ranger, I never knew thee fail. [*Aside.*

Jac. Pray, sir, where did you leave this hat?

Ran. That hat! that hat—'tis my hat—I dropt it in the next chamber as I was looking for yours.

Jac. How mean and despicable do you look now!

Ran. So, so! I am in a pretty pickle! [*Aside.*

Jac. You know by this that I am acquainted with every thing that has passed within; and how ill it agrees with what you have professed to me. Let me advise you, sir, to begone immediately: through that window you may easily get into the street. One scream of mine, the least noise at that door, will wake the house.

Ran. Say you so? [*Aside.*

Jac. Believe me, sir, an injured husband is not so easily appeased, and a suspected wife, that is jealous of her honour ——

Ran. Is the devil, and so let's have no more of her. Look ye, madam, [*Getting between the door and her.*] I have but one argument left, and that is a strong one. Look on me well; I am as handsome, a strong, well-made fellow as any about town; and, since we are alone, as I take it, we can have no occasion to be more private.

[*Going to lay hold of her.*

Jac. I have a reputation, sir, and will maintain it.

Ran. You have a bewitching pair of eyes.

Jac. Consider my virtue. [*Struggling.*

Ran. Consider your beauty and my desires.

Jac. If I were a man, you dared not use me thus.

Ran. I should not have the same temptation.

Jac. Hear me, sir, I will be heard. [*Breaks from him.*] There is a man who will make you repent this usage of me. Oh, Bellamy! where art thou now?

Ran. Bellamy!

Jac. Were he here, you durst not thus affront me. [*Bursting into tears.*

Ran. His mistress, on my soul! [*Aside.*] You can love, madam; you can love, I find. Her tears affect me strangely. [*Aside.*

Jac. I am not ashamed to own my passion for a man of virtue and honour. I love and glory in it.

Ran. Oh, brave! and you can write letters, you can. "I will not trust myself home with you this evening, because I know it is inconvenient."

Jac. Ha!

Ran. "Therefore I beg you would procure me a lodging; 'tis no matter how far off my guardian's. Yours, Jacintha."

Jac. The very words of my letter! I am amazed! Do you know Mr Bellamy?

Ran. There is not a man on earth I have so great a value for: and he must have some value for me too, or he would never have shewn me your pretty epistle; think of that, fair lady. The ladder is at the window, and so, madam, I hope delivering you safe into his arms will, in some measure, expiate the crime I have been guilty of to you.

Jac. Good Heaven! how fortunate is this!

Ran. I believe I make myself appear more wicked than I really am. For, damn me, if I do not feel more satisfaction in the thoughts of restoring you to my friend, than I could have pleasure in any favour your bounty could have bestowed. Let any other rake lay his hand upon his heart, and say the same.

Jac. Your generosity transports me!

Ran. Let us lose no time then; the ladder's ready. Where was you to lodge?

Jac. At Mr Meggot's.

Ran. At my friend Jacky's! better and better still.

Jac. Are you acquainted with him too?

Ran. Ay, ay; why did I not tell you at first that I was one of your old acquaintance? I know all about you, you see; though the devil fetch me if ever I saw you before. Now, madam, give me your hand.

Jac. And now, sir, have with you.

Ran. Then thou art a girl of spirit. And though I long to hug you for trusting yourself with me, I will not beg a single kiss, till Bellamy himself shall give me leave. He must fight well that takes you from me. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The Piazza.*

Enter BELLAMY *and* FRANKLY.

Bel. Psha! what impertinent devil put it into your head to meddle with my affairs?

Frank. You know I went thither in pursuit of another.

Bel. I know nothing you had to do there at all.

Frank. I thought, Mr Bellamy, you were a lover.

Bel. I am so; and therefore should be forgiven this sudden warmth.

Frank. And therefore should forgive the fond impertinence of a lover.

Bel. Jealousy, you know, is as natural an incident to love——

Frank. As curiosity. By one piece of silly curiosity I have gone nigh to ruin both myself and you; let not then your jealousy complete our misfortunes. For I have lost a mistress as well as you. Then let us not quarrel. All may come right again.

Bel. It is impossible. She is gone, removed for ever from my sight: she is in the country by this time.

Frank. How did you lose her after we parted?

Bel. By too great confidence. When I got her to my chair, the chairmen were not to be found. And, safe as I thought in our disguise, I actually put her into the chair, when Mr Strictland and his servants were in sight; which I had no sooner done, than they surrounded us, overpowered me, and carried her away.

Frank. Unfortunate indeed! Could you not make a second attempt?

Bel. I had designed it; but when I came to the door, I found the ladder removed; and hearing no noise, seeing no lights, nor being able to make any body answer, I concluded all attempts as impracticable as I now find them. Ha! I see Lucetta coming. Then they may be still in town.

Enter LUCETTA.

Lucetta, welcome! what news of Jacintha?

Luc. News, sir! you fright me out of my senses! Why, is she not with you?

Bel. What do you mean? With me! I have not seen her since I lost her last night.

Luc. Good Heav'n! then she is undone for ever.

Frank. Why, what's the matter?

Bel. Speak out—I'm all amazement.

Luc. She is escaped, without any of us knowing how. Nobody miss'd her till morning. We all thought she went away with you. But Heaven knows now what may have happened.

Bel. Somebody must have accompanied her in her flight.

Luc. We know of nobody: we are all in confusion at home. My master swears revenge on you. My mistress says a stranger has her.

Bel. A stranger!

Luc. But Mrs Clarinda——

Bel. Clarinda! who is she?

Luc. [*To* FRANKLY.] The lady, sir, who you saw at our house last night.

Frank. Ha! what of her?

Luc. She says, she is sure one Frankly is the man; she saw them together, and knows it to be true.

Frank. Damn'd fortune! [*Aside.*

Luc. Sure this is not Mr Frankly.

Frank. Nothing will convince him now. [*Aside.*

Bel. [*Looking at* FRANKLY.] Ha! Ha! 'tis true!—I see it is true. [*Aside.*] Lucetta, run up to Buckle, and take him with you to search where-ever you can. [*Puts her out.*] Now, Mr Frankly, I have found you. You have used me so ill, that you force me to forget you are my friend.

Frank. What do you mean?

Bel. Draw.

Frank. Are you mad? By heavens, I am innocent.

Bel. I have heard you, and will no longer be imposed on—Defend yourself.

Frank. Nay, if you are so hot, I draw to defend myself, as I would against a madman.

Enter RANGER.

Ran. What the devil, swords at noon-day! Have among you, faith! [*Parts them.*] What's here, Bellamy———Yes, egad, you are Bellamy, and you are Frankly! Put up, both of you——or else——I am a devilish fellow when once my sword is out.

Bel. We shall have a time——

Ran. [*Pushing* BELLAMY *one way.*] A time for what?

Frank. I shall be always as ready to defend my innocence as now.

Ran. [*Pushing* FRANKLY *the other way.*] Innocence! ay, to be sure—at your age—a mighty innocent fellow, no doubt. But what, in the name of common sense, is it that ails you both? are you mad? The last time I saw you, you were hugging and kissing; and now you are cutting one another's throats—I never knew any good come of one fellow's beslavering another—But I shall put you into better humour, I warrant you ——Bellamy, Frankly, listen both of you—Such fortune—such a scheme——

Bel. Pr'ythee, leave fooling. What, art drunk?

Frank. He is always so, I think.

Ran. And who gave you the privilege of thinking? Drunk! no; I am not drunk.—Tipsy perhaps with my good fortune—merry, and in spirits—though I have not fire enough to run my friend through the body. Not drunk, though Jack Meggot and I have boxed it about——Champaign was the word for two whole hours by Shrewsbury clock.

Bel. Jack Meggot! Why, I left him at one, going to bed.

Ran. That may be, but I made shift to rouse him and his family by four this morning. Ounds, I pick'd up a wench, and carried her to his house.

Bel. Ha!

Ran. Such a variety of adventures—Nay, you shall hear——But, before I begin, Bellamy, you shall promise me half a dozen kisses before hand: for the devil fetch me if that little jade, Jacintha, would give me one, though I pressed hard.

Bel. Who, Jacintha? press to kiss Jacintha?

Ran. Kiss her! ay, why not? is she not a woman, and made to be kissed?

Bel. Kiss her——I shall run distracted!

Ran. How could I help it, when I had her alone, you rogue, in her bed-chamber at midnight! if I had been to be sacrificed, I should have done it.

Bel. Bed-chamber, at midnight! I can hold no longer——Draw.

Frank. Be easy, Bellamy. [*Interposing.*

Bel. He has been at some of his damn'd tricks with her.

Frank. Hear him out.

Ran. 'Sdeath, how could I know she was his mistress? But I tell this story most miserably. I should have told you first, I was in another lady's chamber. By the lord, I got in at the window by a ladder of ropes.

Frank. Ha! Another lady?

Ran. Another: and stole in upon her whilst she was undressing; beautiful as an angel, blooming and young——

Frank. What, in the same house?

Bel. What is this to Jacintha? Ease me of my pain.

Ran. Ay, ay, in the same house, on the same floor. The sweetest, little angel—But I design to have another touch with her.

Frank. 'Sdeath! but you shall have a touch upon me first.

Bel. Stay, Frankly. [*Interposing.*

Ran. Why, what strange madness has possessed you both, that nobody must kiss a pretty wench but yourselves?

Bel. What became of Jacintha?

Ran. Ounds! what have you done, that you must monopolize kissing?

Frank. Pr'ythee, honest Ranger, ease me of the pain I am in. Was her name Clarinda?

Bel. Speak in plain words, where Jacintha is, where to be found. Dear boy, tell me.

Ran. Ay, now it is honest Ranger; and, dear boy, tell me—and a minute ago, my throat was to be cut——I could find in my heart not to open my lips. But here comes Jack Meggot, who will let you into all the secret, though he designed to keep it from you, in half the time that I can, though I had ever so great a mind to tell it you.

Enter JACK MEGGOT.

J. Meg. So, save ye, save ye, lads! we have been frighten'd out of our wits for you. Not hearing of Mr Bellamy, poor Jacintha is ready to sink for fear of any accident.

Bel. Is she at your house?

J. Meg. Why, did not you know that? We dispatch'd Master Ranger to you three hours ago.

Ran. Ay, plague! but I had business of my own, so I could not come—Hark ye, Frankly, is your girl, maid, wife, or widow?

Frank. A maid, I hope.

Ran. The odds are against you, Charles.—— But mine is married, you rogue, and her husband jealous—The devil is in it if I do not reap some reward for my last night's service.

Bel. He has certainly been at Mrs Strictland herself. But, Frankly, I dare not look on you.

Frank. This one embrace cancels all thoughts of enmity.

Bel. Thou generous man!—But I must haste to ease Jacintha of her fears. [*Exit.*

Frank. And I to make up matters with Clarinda. [*Exit.*

Ran. And I to some kind wench or other, Jack. But where shall I find her, Heaven knows. And so, my service to your monkey.

J. Meg. Adieu, rattlepate. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Hall of Mr* STRICTLAND'S *House.*

Enter Mrs STRICTLAND *and* CLARINDA.

Mrs Str. But, why in such a hurry, my dear? stay till your servants can go along with you.

Cla. Oh, no matter; they'll follow with my things. It is but a little way off, and my chair will guard me. After my staying out so late last night, I am sure Mr Strictland will think every minute an age whilst I am in his house.

Mrs Str. I am as much amazed at his suspecting your innocence as my own; and every time I think of it, I blush at my present behaviour to you.

Cla. No ceremony, dear child.

Mrs Str. No, Clarinda, I am too well acquainted with your good humour. But I fear, in the eye of a malicious world, it may look like a confirmation of his suspicion.

Cla. My dear, if the world will speak ill of me for the little innocent gaiety, which I think the peculiar happiness of my temper, I know no way to prevent it, and am only sorry the world is so ill-natured: but I shall not part with my mirth, I assure them, so long as I know it innocent. I wish, my dear, this may be the greatest uneasiness your husband's jealousy ever gives you.

Mrs Str. I hope he never again may have such occasion as he had last night.

Cla. You are so unfashionable a wife.—Why, last night's accident would have made half the

wives in London easy for life. Has not his jealousy discover'd itself openly? And are not you innocent? There is nothing but your foolish temper that prevents his being absolutely in your power.

Mrs Str. Clarinda, this is too serious an affair to laugh at. Let me advise you to take care of Mr Frankly; observe his temper well, and if he has the least taint of jealousy, cast him off, and never trust to keeping him in your power.

Cla. You will hear little more of Frankly, I believe. Here is Mr Strictland.

Enter Mr STRICTLAND *and* LUCETTA.

Str. Lucetta says you want me, madam.

Cla. I trouble you, sir, only that I might return you thanks for the civilities I have received in your family, before I took my leave.

Str. Keep them to yourself, dear madam. As it is my request that you leave my house, your thanks upon that occasion are not very desirable.

Cla. Oh, sir, you need not fear. My thanks were only for your civilities. They will not overburden you. But I'll conform to your humour, sir, and part with as little ceremony——

Strict. As we met.

Cla. The brute! [*Aside.*] My dear, good b'ye, we may meet again. [*To Mrs* STRICTLAND.

Str. If you dare trust me with your hand.

Cla. Lucetta, remember my instructions. Now, sir, have with you.

[*Mr* STRICTLAND *leads* CLARINDA *out.*

Mrs Str. Are her instructions cruel or kind, Lucetta? For I suppose they relate to Mr Frankly.

Luc. Have you a mind to try if I can keep a secret as well as yourself, madam? But I will shew you I am fit to be trusted by keeping this, though it signifies nothing.

Mrs Str. This answer is not so civil, I think.

Luc. I beg pardon, madam, I meant it not to offend.

Mrs Str. Pray let us have no more such. I neither desire, nor want your assistance.

Re-enter Mr STRICTLAND.

Str. She is gone; I feel myself somewhat easier already. Since I have begun the day with gallantry, madam, shall I conduct you up?

Mrs Str. There is something, sir, which gives you secret uneasiness. I wish——

Str. Perhaps so, madam; and perhaps it may soon be no secret at all. [*Leads her out.*

Luc. Would I were once well settled with my young lady; for at present, this is but an odd sort of a queer family. Last night's affair puzzles me. A hat there was that belong'd to none of us, that's certain: madam was in a fright, that is as certain; and I brought all off. Jacintha escaped, no one of us knows how. The good man's jealousy was yesterday groundless; yet to-day, in my mind, he is very much in the right. Mighty odd all this! —Somebody knocks. If this should be Clarinda's spark, I have an odd message for him too.

[*She opens the door.*

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. So, my pretty handmaid, meeting with you gives me some hopes. May I speak with Clarinda?

Luc. Whom do you want, sir?

Frank. Clarinda, child. The young lady I was admitted to yesterday.

Luc. Clarinda!——No such person lives here, I assure you.

Frank. Where then?

Luc. I don't know indeed, sir.

Frank. Will you inquire within?

Luc. Nobody knows in this house, sir, you will find.

Frank. What do you mean? She is a friend of Jacintha's, your lady. I will take my oath she was here last night; and you yourself spoke of her being here this morning—Not know!

Luc. No; none of us know. She went away of a sudden—no one of us can imagine whither.

Frank. Why, faith, child, thou hast a tolerable face, and hast deliver'd this denial very handsomely: but let me tell you, your impertinence this morning had like to have cost me my life; now, therefore, make me amends. I come from your young mistress; I come from Mr Bellamy; I come with my purse full of gold, that persuasive rhetoric, to win you to let me see and speak to this Clarinda once again.

Luc. She is not here, sir.

Frank. Direct me to her.

Luc. No, I cann't do that neither.

Enter Mr STRICTLAND *behind.*

Str. I heard a knocking at the door, and a man's voice—Ha! [*Aside.*

Frank. Deliver this letter to her.

Str. By all my fears a letter!

Luc. I don't know but I may be tempted to do that.

Frank. Take it then—and with it this.

[*Kisses her, and gives her money.*

Str. Um! there are two bribes in a breath! What a jade she is! [*Aside.*

Luc. Ay; this gentleman understands reason.

Frank. And be assured you oblige your mistress while you are serving me.

Str. Her mistress!—Damn'd sex! and damn'd wife, thou art an epitome of that sex. [*Aside.*

Frank. And if you can procure me an answer, your fee shall be enlarged. [*Exit.*

Luc. The next step is to get her to read this letter.

Str. [*Snatches the letter.*] No noise———but stand silent there, whilst I read this. [*Breaks it open, and drops the case.*] "Madam, the gaiety of a heart, happy as mine was yesterday, may, I hope, easily excuse the unseasonable visit I made your house last night."—Death and the devil! confusion! I shall run distracted. It is too much! —There was a man, then, to whom the hat belonged; and I was gull'd, abused, cheated, imposed on by a chit, a child—

Oh, woman, woman!—But I'll be calm, search it to the bottom, and have a full revenge——

Luc. [*Aside.*] So, here's fine work! He'll make himself very ridiculous though.

Strict. [*Reads on.*] "I know my innocence will appear so manifestly, that I need only appeal to the lady who accompanied you at Bath." Your very humble servant, good, innocent, fine Madam Clarinda. "And I do not doubt but her good-nature," bawd! bawd! "will not let you persist in injuring your obedient humble servant.

CHARLES FRANKLY."

Now, who can say my jealousy lack'd foundation, or my suspicion of fine madam's innocent gaiety was unjust?—Gaiety! why ay, 'twas gaiety brought him hither. Gaiety makes her a bawd ——my wife may be a whore in gaiety. What a number of things become fashionable under the notion of gaiety—What, you received this epistle in gaiety too; and were to deliver it to my wife, I suppose, when the gay fit came next upon her? —Why, you impudent young strumpet, do you laugh at me.

Luc. I would, if I dared, laugh heartily——Be pleased, sir, only to look at that piece of paper that lies there.

Str. Ha!

Luc. I have not touched it, sir. It is the case that letter came in, and the direction will inform you whom I was to deliver it to.

Str. This is directed to Clarinda!

Luc. Oh, is it so? Now read it over again, and all your foolish doubts will vanish.

Str. I have no doubts at all. I am satisfied that you, Jacintha, Clarinda, my wife, all are——

Luc. Lud! Lud! you will make a body mad.

Str. Hold your impertinent tongue.

Luc. You'll find the thing to be just as I say, sir.

Str. Begone. [*Exit* LUCETTA.] They must be poor at the work, indeed, if they did not lend one another their names. 'Tis plain, 'tis evident, and I am miserable. But for my wife, she shall not stay one night longer in my house. Separation, shame, contempt, shall be her portion. I am determined in the thing; and when once it is over, I may, perhaps, be easy. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*The Street.*

CLARINDA *brought in a chair,* RANGER *following.*

Ran. Harkye, chairmen! damn your confounded trot. Go slower.

Cla. Here, stop.

Ran. By Heavens! the monsters hear reason, and obey.

Cla. [*Letting down the window.*] What troublesome fellow was that?

1 *Chair.* Some rake, I warrant, that cannot, carry himself home, and wants us to do it for him.

Cla. There——And pray do you take care I be not troubled with him. [*Goes in.*

Ran. That's as much as to say now, pray follow me. Madam, you are a charming woman, and I will do it——

1 *Chair.* Stand off, sir.

Ran. Pr'ythee, honest fellow—what—what writing is that? [*Endeavouring to get in.*

2 *Chair.* You come not here.

Ran. Lodgings to be let: a pretty convenient inscription, and the sign of a good modest family. There may be lodgings for gentlemen as well as ladies. Harkye, rogues; I'll lay you all the silver I have in my pocket, there it is, I get in there in spite of your teeth, ye pimps.

[*Throws down the money, and goes in.*

[*Within.*] Chair, chair, chair!

Chair. Who calls chair?

1 *Chair.* What, have you let the gentleman in?

2 *Chair.* I'll tell you what, partner, he certainly slipt by whilst we were picking up the money. Come, take up: [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—CLARINDA'S *Lodgings.*

Enter CLARINDA, *and Maid following.*

Maid. Bless me, madam, you seem disorder'd; what's the matter?

Cla. Some impertinent fellow follow'd the chair, and I am afraid they let him in. [*A noise between* RANGER *and Landlady.*] I should certainly know that voice. [RANGER *talks with the Landlady.*] My madcap cousin Ranger, as I live. I am sure he does not know me.——If I could but hide my face now, what sport I should have! A mask, a mask! run and see if you can find a mask.

Maid. I believe there is one above.

Cla. Run, run, and fetch it. [*Exit Maid.*] Here he comes.

Enter RANGER *and Landlady.*

How unlucky this is! [*Turning from them.*

Land. What's your business here, unmannerly sir?

Ran. Well, let's see these lodgings that are to be let. Gad, a very pretty neat tenement—— But, harkye, is it real and natural all that, or only patched up and new-painted this summer-season, against the town fills?

Land. What does the saucy fellow mean with his double tenders here? Get you down——

Enter Maid with a mask.

Maid. Here is a very dirty one.

[*Aside to* CLARINDA.

Cla. No matter——now we shall see a little what he would be at. [*Aside.*

Land. This is an honest house. For all your laced waistcoat, I'll have you thrown down neck and heels.

Ran. Pho! not in such a hurry, good old lady ——A mask! nay, with all my heart. It saves a world of blushing. Have you ne'er a one for me? —I am apt to be ashamed myself on these occasions.

Land. Get you down, I say!——

Ran. Not if I guess right, old lady. Madam [*To* CLARINDA, *who makes signs to the Landlady to retire.*] look ye there now! that a woman should live to your age, and know so little of the

matter! Begone. [*Exit Landlady.*] By her forwardness, this should be a whore of quality. My boy, Ranger, thou art in luck to-day. She won't speak, I find—then I will. [*Aside.*] Delicate lodgings truly, madam; and very neatly furnish'd—A very convenient room this, I must needs own, to entertain a mix'd company. But, my dear charming creature, does not that door open to a more commodious apartment for the happiness of a private friend, or so? The prettiest brass lock.—Fast, um; that won't do. 'Sdeath! you are a beautiful woman; I am sure you are. Pr'ythee let me see your face. It is your interest, child—The longer you delay, the more I shall expect. Therefore, [*Taking her hand.*] my dear, soft, kind, new acquaintance, thus let me take your hand, and whilst you gently with the other let day-light in upon me, let me softly hold you to me, that with my longing lips I may receive the warmest, best impression. [*She unmasks.*] Clarinda!

Cla. Ha, ha! your servant, cousin Ranger—Ha, ha, ha.!

Ran. Oh, your humble servant, madam. You had like to have been beholden to your mask, cousin—I must brazen it out. [*Aside.*

Cla. Ha, ha, ha! You were not so happy in your disguise, sir. The pretty stagger in your gait, that happy disposition of your wig, the genteel negligence of your whole person, and those pretty flowers of modish gallantry, made it impossible to mistake you, my sweet coz. Ha, ha!

Ran. Oh, I knew you too, but I fancied you had taken a particular liking to my person, and had a mind to sink the relation under that little piece of black velvet! and, egad, you never find me behind hand in a frolic. But since it is otherwise, my merry, good-humoured cousin, I am as heartily glad to see you in town, as I should be to meet any of my old bottle acquaintance.

Cla. And on my side, I am as happy in meeting your worship, as I should be in a rencounter with e'er a petticoat in Christendom.

Ran. And if you have any occasion for a dangling gallant to Vauxhall, Ranelagh, or even to the poor neglected Park, you are so unlike the rest of your virtuous sisters of the petticoat, that I will venture myself with you.

Cla. Take care what you promise; for who knows but this face you were pleased to say so many pretty things of before you saw it, may raise so many rivals among your kept mistresses, and reps of quality——

Ran. Hold, hold! a truce with your satire, sweet coz; or if scandal must be the topic of every virtuous woman's conversation, call for your tea-water, and let it be in its proper element. Come, your tea, your tea!

Enter a Maid.

Cla. With all my heart——Who's there? Get tea—upon condition that you stay till it comes.

Ran. That is according as you behave, madam.

Cla. Oh, sir, I am very sensible of the favour.

Ran. Nay, you may, I assure you; for there is but one woman of virtue, besides yourself, I would stay with ten minutes (and I have not known her above these twelve hours;) the insipidity, or the rancour of their discourse is insufferable—'Sdeath! I had rather take the air with my grandmother.

Cla. Ha, ha, ha! the ladies are highly obliged to you, I vow.

Ran. I tell you what; the lady I speak of was obliged to me, and the generous girl is ready to own it.

Cla. And, pray, when was it you did virtue this considerable service?

Ran. But this last night, the devil fetch me! A romantic whim of mine conveyed me into her chamber, where I found her, young and beautiful, alone at midnight, dress'd like a soft Adonis; her lovely hair all loose about her shoulders——

Cla. In boy's clothes! this is worth attending to. [*Aside.*

Ran. Gad, I no more suspected her being a woman, than I did your being my cater-cousin.

Cla. How did you discover it at last?

Ran. Why, faith, she very modestly dropt me a hint of it herself.

Cla. Herself! If this should be Jacintha! [*Aside.*

Ran. Ay, 'foregad, did she; which I imagined a good sign at midnight, ay, cousin! So I e'en invented a long story of a passion I had for her, though I had never seen her before—you know my old way;—and said so many such tender things——

Cla. As you said to me just now.

Ran. Pho! quite in another style, I assure you. It was midnight, and I was in a right cue.

Cla. Well! and what did she answer to all these protestations?

Ran. Why, instead of running into my arms at once, as I expected——

Cla. To be sure.

Ran. 'Gad, like a free-hearted, honest girl, she frankly told me she liked another better than she liked me; that I had something in my face that shewed I was a gentleman; and she would e'en trust herself with me, if I would give her my word I would convey her to her spark.

Cla. Oh, brave! and how did you bear this?

Ran. Why, curse me, if I am ever angry with a woman for not having a passion for me.

Cla. No?

Ran. Never. I only hate your sex's vain pretence of having no passion at all. Gad, I loved the good-natured girl for it; took her at her word, stole her out of the window, and this morning made a very honest fellow happy in the possession of her.

Cla. And her name is Jacintha?

Ran. Ha!

Cla. Your amours are no secret, sir. You see, you might as well have told me all the whole of last night's adventure; for you find I know—

Ran. All! Why, what do you know?

Cla. Nay, nothing, I only know that a gentleman's hat cannot be dropt in a lady's chamber—

Ran. The devil!

Cla. But a husband is such an odd, impertinent, awkward creature, that he will be stumbling over it.

Ran. Here has been fine work. [*Aside.*] But how, in the name of wonder, should you know all this?

Cla. By being in the same house.

Ran. In the same house!

Cla. Ay, in the same house, a witness of the confusion you have made.

Ran. Frankly's Clarinda, by all that's fortunate! It must be so! [*Aside.*

Cla. And let me tell you, sir, that even the dull low-spirited diversions you ridicule in us tame creatures, are preferable to the romantic exploits that only wine can raise you to.

Ran. Yes, cousin: but I'll be even with you. [*Aside.*

Cla. If you reflect, cousin, you will find a great deal of wit in shocking a lady's modesty, disturbing her quiet, tainting her reputation, and ruining the peace of a whole family.

Ran. To be sure.

Cla. These are the high-mettled pleasures of you men of spirit, that the insipidity of the virtuous can never arrive at. And can you in reality think your Burgundy, and your Bacchus, your Venus, and your Loves an excuse for all this? Fie, cousin, fie!

Ran. No, cousin.

Cla. What, dumb! I am glad you have modesty enough left not to go about to excuse yourself.

Ran. It is as you say; when we are sober, and reflect but ever so little on the follies we commit, we are ashamed and sorry; and yet the very next minute we run again into the same absurdities.

Cla. What!. moralizing, cousin! ha, ha, ha!

Ran. What you know is not half, not a hundredth part of the mischief of my last night's frolic; and yet the very next petticoat I saw this morning I must follow it, and be damn'd to me; tho', for aught I know, poor Frankly's life may depend upon it.

Cla. Whose life, sir?

Ran. And here do I stand prating to you now.

Cla. Pray, good cousin, explain yourself.

Ran. Good cousin! she has it. [*Aside.*] Why, whilst I was making off with the wench, Bellamy and he were quarrelling about her; and though Jacintha and I made all the haste we could, we did not get to them before——

Cla. Before what? I'm frightened out of my wits!

Ran. Not that Frankly cared three half-pence for the girl.

Cla. But there was no mischief done, I hope?

Ran. Pho! a slight scratch; nothing at all, as the surgeon said: though he was but a queer-looking son of a bitch of a surgeon neither.

Cla. Good God! why he should have the best that can be found in London.

Ran. Ay, indeed, so he should; that was what I was going for when I saw you. [*Sits down.*] They are all at Jack Meggot's hard by, and you will keep me here.

Cla. I keep you here! For Heaven's sake be gone.

Ran. Your tea is a damn'd while a-coming.

Cla. You shall have no tea now, I assure you.

Ran. Nay! one dish.

Cla. No, positively you shall not stay.

Ran. Your commands are absolute, madam. [*Going.*

Cla. Then Frankly is true, and I only am to blame!

Ran. [*Returns.*] But I beg ten thousand pardons, cousin, that I should forget——

Cla. Forget what?

Ran. Forget to salute you.

Cla. Pshaw! how can you trifle at such a time as this?

Ran. A trifle! wrong not your beauty.

Cla. Lord, how teasing you are. There.

Ran. [*Kisses her.*] Poor thing; how uneasy she is. Nay, no ceremony, you shall not stir a step with me..

Cla. I do not intend it. This is downright provoking. [*Exit* RANGER.] Who's there?

Enter Landlady.

Land. Madam, did your ladyship call?

Cla. Does one Mr Meggot live in this neighbourhood?

Land. Yes, madam, a fine gentleman, and keeps a noble house, and a world of company.

Cla. Very well; I don't want his history. I wonder my servants are not come yet.

Land. Lack-a-day, madam! they are all below.

Cla. Send up one then with a card to me. I must know the truth of this immediately. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Room in Mr* STRICTLAND'S *House. Mr and Mrs* STRICTLAND *discovered; she weeping, and he writing.*

Mrs Str. Heigh ho!

Str. What can possibly be the occasion of that sigh, madam? you have yourself agreed to a maintenance, and a maintenance no duchess need be ashamed of.

Mrs Str. But the extremities of provocation that drove me to that agreement——

Str. Were the effect of your own follies.—— Why do you disturb me? [*Writes on.*

Mrs Str. I would not willingly give you a moment's uneasiness; I but desire a fair and equal

hearing: and if I satisfy you not in every point, then abandon me, discard me to the world, and its malicious tongues.

Str. What was it you said? Damn this pen!

Mrs Str. I say, Mr Strictland, I would only—

Str. You would only——You would only repeat what you have been saying this hour,—I am innocent; and when I shewed you the letter I had taken from your maid, what was then your poor evasion, but that it was to Clarinda, and you were innocent.

Mrs Str. Heaven knows, I am innocent!

Str. But I know your Clarinda, your woman of honour, is your blind, your cover, your—— But why do I distract myself about a woman I have no longer any concern with? Here, madam, is your fate. A letter to your brother in the country.

Mrs Str. Sir——

Str. I have told him what a sister he has to receive, and how to bid her welcome.

Mrs Str. Then my ruin is complete. My brother!——

Str. I must vindicate my own honour, else what will the world say?

Mrs Str. That brother was my only hope, my only ground of patience. In his retirement I hoped my name might have been safe, and slept, till by some happy means you might at length have known me innocent, and pitied me.

Str. Retirement! pretty soul! no, no; that face was never made for retirement; it is another sort of retiring you are fittest for. Ha! hark! What's that? [*A knocking at the door.*] Two gentle taps—and why but two? was that the signal, madam? Stir not, on your life.

Mrs Str. Give me resolution, Heaven, to bear this usage, and keep it secret from the world. [*Aside.*

Str. I will have no signs, no items, no hem to tell him I am here. Ha! another tap. The gentleman is in haste I find. [*Opens the door, and enter* TESTER.] Tester! why did you not come in, rascal? [*Beats him.*] All vexations meet to cross me.

Test. Lard, sir! what do you strike me for? my mistress ordered me never to come in where she was, without first knocking at the door.

Str. Oh, cunning devil! Tester is too honest to be trusted.

Mrs Str. Unhappy man! will nothing undeceive him? [*Aside.*

Test. Sir, here is a letter.

Str. To my wife?

Test. No, sir, to you. The servant waits below.

Str. Art sure it is a servant?

Test. Sir! [*Staring.*] it is Mr Buckle, sir.

Str. I am mad: I know not what to say, or do, or think. But let's read: [*Reads to himself.*

"Sir, we cannot bear to reflect that Mrs Strictland may possibly be ruined in your esteem, and in the voice of the world, only by the confusion which our affairs have made in your family, without offering all within our power to clear the misunderstanding between you. If you will give yourself the trouble but to step to Mr Meggot's, where all parties will be, we doubt not but we can entirely satisfy your most flagrant suspicions, to the honour of Mrs Strictland, and the quiet of your lives. JACINTHA, JOHN BELLAMY."

Hey! Here is the whole gang witnessing for one another. They think I am an ass, and will be led by the nose to believe every thing. Call me a chair. [*Exit* TESTER.] Yes, I will go to this rendezvous of enemies—I will—and find out all her plots, her artifices and contrivances: it will clear my conduct to her brother, and all her friends. [*Exit* Mr STRICTLAND.

Mrs Str. Gone so abruptly! What can that letter be about? No matter; there is no way left to make us easy but by my disgrace, and I must learn to suffer; time and innocence will teach me to bear it patiently.

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. Mrs Bellamy, madam, (for my young lady is married) begs you would follow Mr Strictland to Mr Meggot's; she makes no doubt but she shall be able to make you and my master easy.

Mrs Str. But how came she to know any thing of the matter?

Luc. I have been with them, madam; I could not bear to see so good a lady ill-treated.

Mrs Str. I am indeed, Lucetta, ill-treated: but I hope this day will be the last of it.

Luc. Madam Clarinda and Mr Frankly will be there, and the young gentleman, madam, who was with you in the room last night.

Mrs Str. Ha! if he is there, there may be hopes; and it is worth the trying.

Luc. Dear lady, let me call a chair.

Mrs Str. I go with you. I cannot be more wretched than I am. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in Mr* MEGGOT'S *House.*

Enter FRANKLY, RANGER, BELLAMY, JACINTHA, *and* J. MEGGOT.

Frank. Oh, Ranger, this is news indeed! your cousin, and a lady of such fortune!

Ran. I have done the business for you: I tell you she's your own. She loves you.

Frank. You make my heart dance with joy. Words are too faint to tell the joy I feel.

Ran. I have put that heart of hers into such a flutter, that I'll lay a hundred guineas, with the assistance which this lady has promised me, I fix her yours directly.

Jac. Ay, ay, Mr Frankly, we have a design upon her which cannot fail. But you must obey orders.

Frank. Most willingly: but remember, dear lady, I have more than life at stake.

Jac. Away then into the next room; for she is this instant coming hither.

Frank. Hither! you surprise me more and more.

Jac. Here is a message from her, by which she desires leave to wait on me this afternoon.

Ran. Only for the chance of seeing you here, I assure ye.

Frank. Let me hug thee; though I know not how to believe it.

Ran. Psha! pr'ythee don't stifle me! It is a busy day, a very busy day.

J. Meg. Thou art the most unaccountable creature in life.

Ran. But the most lucky one, Jack, if I succeed for Frankly as I have for Bellamy, and my heart whispers me I shall. Come in, most noble Mr Buckle: and what have you to propose?

Enter BUCKLE.

Buc. A lady, madam, in a chair, says her name is Clarinda.

Jac. Desire her to walk up.

Bel. How could you let her wait? [*Exit* BUCKLE.] You must excuse him, madam; Buckle is a true bachelor's servant, and knows no manners.

Jac. Away, away, Mr Frankly, and stay till I call you. A rap with my fan shall be the signal. [*Exit* FRANKLY.] We make very free with your house, Mr Meggot.

J. Meg. Oh, you could not oblige me more.

Enter CLARINDA.

Cla. Dear Mrs Bellamy, pity my confusion. I am to wish you joy, and ask your pardon all in a breath. I know not what to say; I am quite ashamed of my last night's behaviour.

Jac. Come, come, Clarinda, it is all well; all is over and forgot. Mr Bellamy——— [*Salute.*

Cla. I wish you joy, sir, with all my heart, and should have been very sorry if any folly of mine had prevented it.

Bel. Madam, I am obliged to you.

Cla. I see nothing of Mr Frankly! my mind misgives me. [*Aside.*

Ran. And so, you came hither purely out of friendship, good nature, and humility?

Cla. Purely.

Ran. To confess your offences, to beg pardon, and to make reparation.

Cla. Purely. Is this any thing so extraordinary?

J. Meg. The most so of any thing in life, I think.

Ran. A very whimsical business for so fine a lady, and an errand you seldom went on before, I fancy, my dear cousin.

Jac. Never, I dare swear, if I may judge by the awkward concern she shews in delivering it.

Cla. Concern! Lard, well, I protest, you are all exceeding pretty company! Being settled for life, Jacintha, gives an ease to the mind that brightens conversation strangely.

Jac. I am sorry, with all my heart, you are not in the same condition; for as you are, my dear, you are horridly *chagrine*.

Ran. But with a little of our help, madam, the lady may recover, and be very good company.

Cla. Hum! What does he mean, Mr Bellamy?

Bel. Ask him, madam.

Cla. Indeed I shall not give myself the trouble.

Jac. Then you know what he means?

Cla. Something impertinent, I suppose, not worth explaining.

Jac. It is something you won't let him explain, I find.

Enter BUCKLE, *and whispers* MEGGOT.

J. Meg. Very well. Desire him to walk into the parlour. Madam, the gentleman is below.

Jac. Then every one to your posts. You know your cues.

Ran. I warrant ye. [*Exeunt Gentlemen.*

Cla. All gone! I'm glad of it, for I want to speak to you.

Jac. And I, my dear Clarinda, have something which I do not know how to tell you; but it must be known sooner or later.

Cla. What's the matter?

Jac. Poor Mr Frankly———

Cla. You fright me out of my senses!

Jac. Has no wounds but what you can cure. Ha, ha, ha!

Cla. Psha! I am angry.

Jac. Psha! you are pleased; and will be more so, when I tell you, this man, whom fortune has thrown in your way, is, in rank and temper, the man in the world who suits you best for a husband.

Cla. Husband! I say, husband, indeed! Where will this end? [*Aside.*

Jac. His very soul is yours, and he only waits an opportunity of telling you so. He is in the next room. Shall I call him in?

Cla. My dear girl, hold!

Jac. How foolish is this coyness now, Clarinda! If the men were here indeed, something might be said——And so, Mr Frankly——

Cla. How can you be so teasing?

Jac. Nay, I am in downright earnest: and, to shew how particular I have been in my enquiries, though I know you have a spirit above regarding the modish, paltry way of a Smithfield bargain——his fortune——

Cla. I don't care what his fortune is.

Jac. Don't you so? Then you are farther gone than I thought you were.

Cla. No, psha! pr'ythee, I don't mean so neither.

Jac. I don't care what you mean: but you won't like him the worse, I hope, for having a fortune superior to your own. Now shall I call him in?

Cla. Pho, dear girl——Some other time.

Jac. [*Raps with her fan.*] That's the signal, and here he is. You shall not stir: I positively will leave you together. [*Exit* JACINTHA.

Cla. I tremble all over.

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. Pardon this freedom, madam: but I hope our having so luckily met with a common friend in Mrs Bellamy——

Cla. Sir!

Frank. Makes any farther apology for my behaviour last night absolutely unnecessary.

Cla. So far, Mr Frankly, that I think the apology should be rather on my side, for the impertinent bustle I made about her.

Frank. This behaviour gives me hopes, madam: pardon the construction—but from the little bustle you made about the lady, may I not hope you was not quite indifferent about the gentleman?

Cla. Have a care of being too sanguine in your hopes; might not a love of power, or the satisfaction of shewing that power, or the dear pleasure of abusing that power; might not these have been foundation enough for more than what I did?

Frank. Charming woman! With most of your sex, I grant, they might, but not with you. Whatever power your beauty gives, your good-nature will allow you no other use of it than to oblige.

Cla. This is the height of compliment, Mr Frankly.

Frank. Not in my opinion, I assure you, madam; and I am now going to put it to the trial.

Cla. What is he going to say now? [*Aside.*

Frank. What is it that ails me that I cannot speak? Psha! he here! [*Aside.*

Enter RANGER.

Interrupted! impertinent!

Ran. There is no sight so ridiculous as a pair of your true lovers. Here are you two, now, bowing and cringing, and keeping a passion secret from one another, that is no secret to all the house beside. And if you don't make the matter up immediately, it will be all over the town within these two hours.

Cla. What do you mean?

Frank. Ranger——

Ran. Do you be quiet, cann't ye? [*Aside.*] But it is over, I suppose, cousin, and you have given him your consent.

Cla. Sir, the liberties you are pleased to take with me—

Ran. Oh! in your airs still, are you? Why then, Mr Frankly, there is a certain letter of yours, sir, to this lady.—

Cla. A letter to me!

Ran. Ay! to you, madam.

Frank. Ha! what of that letter?

Ran. It is only fallen into Mr Strictland's hands, that is all; and he has read it.

Frank. Read it!

Ran. Ay, read it to all his family at home, and to all the company below: and if some stop be not put to it, it will be read in all the coffee-houses in town.

Frank. A stop! this sword shall put a stop to it, or I will perish in the attempt.

Ran. But will that sword put a stop to the talk of the town?—Only make it talk the faster, take my word for it.

Cla. This is all a trick.

Ran. A trick! is it so? you shall soon see that, my fine cousin. [*Exit* RANGER.

Frank. It is but too true, I fear. There is such a letter, which I gave Lucetta. Can you forgive me? Was I much to blame, when I could neither see nor hear of you?

Cla. [*Tenderly.*] You give yourself, Mr Frankly, a thousand more uneasinesses than you need about me.

Frank. If this uneasiness but convinces you how much I love you—Interrupted again!

Cla. This is downright malice. [*Aside.*

Enter RANGER, *followed by* JACINTHA, *Mr* STRICTLAND, BELLAMY, *and* MEGGOT.

Ran. Enter, enter, gentlemen and lady. Now you shall see whether this is a trick or no.

Cla. Mr. Strictland here! What is all this?

Jac. Do not be uneasy, my dear! we will explain it to you.

Frank. I cannot bear this trifling, Ranger, when my heart is on the rack.

Ran. Come this way then, and learn.

[JACINTHA, CLARINDA, FRANKLY *and* RANGER *retire.*

[*Mr* STRICTLAND, BELLAMY, *and* MEGGOT *advance.*

Str. Why, I know not well what to say. This has a face. This letter may as well agree with Clarinda, as with my wife, as you have told the story; and Lucetta explained it so: but she, for a sixpenny piece, would have construed it the other way.

J. Meg. But, sir, if we produce this Mr Frankly to you, and he owns himself the author of this letter——

Bel. And if Clarinda likewise be brought before your face to encourage his addresses, there can be no further room for doubt.

Str. No. Let that appear, and I shall, I think I shall, be satisfied—But yet it cannot be—

Bel. Why not? Hear me, sir. [*They talk.*

[JACINTHA, CLARINDA, FRANKLY, *and* RANGER *advance.*

Jac. In short, Clarinda, unless the affair is made up directly, a separation, with all the obloquy on her side, must be the consequence.

Cla. Poor Mrs. Strictland! I pity her: but for him, he deserves all he feels, were it ten times what it is.

Jac. It is for her sake only that we beg of you both to bear his impertinence.

Cla. With all my heart. You will do what you please with me.

Frank. Generous creature!

Str. Ha! here she is, and with her the very man I saw deliver the letter to Lucetta. I do begin to fear I have made myself a fool. Now for the proof.——Here is a letter, sir, which has given me great disturbance, and these gentlemen assure me it was writ by you.

Frank. That letter, sir, upon my honour, I left this morning with Lucetta, for this lady.

Str. For that lady! and Frankly, the name at the bottom, is not feigned, but your real name?

Frank. Frankly is my name.

Str. I see, I feel myself ridiculous.

Jac. Now, Mr Strictland, I hope——

J. Meg. Ay, ay; a clear case.

Str. I am satisfied, and will go this instant to Mrs Strictland.

Ran. Why then the devil fetch me if this would satisfy me!

Str. What's that?

Ran. Nay, nothing; it is no affair of mine.

Bel. What do you mean, Ranger?

Str. Ay, what do you mean? I will know before I stir.

Ran. With all my heart, sir. Cannot you see that all this may be a concerted matter between them?

Frank. Ranger, you know I can resent.

Str. Go on; I will defend you, let who will resent it.

Ran. Why then, sir, I declare myself your friend: and were I as you, nothing but their immediate marriage should convince me.

Str. Sir, you're right, and are my friend indeed. Give me your hand.

Ran. Nay, were I to hear her say, I, Clarinda, take thee, Charles, I would not believe them, 'till I saw them a-bed together. Now resent it as you will.

Str. Ay, sir, as you will: but nothing less shall convince me; and so, my fine lady, if you are in earnest——

Cla. Sure, Mr Strictland——

Str. Nay, no flouncing; you cannot escape.

Ran. Why, Frankly, hast no soul?

Frank. I pity her confusion.

Ran. Pity her confusion!—the man's a fool—Here, take her hand.

Frank. Thus, on my knees, then, let me ravish, with your hand, your heart.

Cla. Ravish it you cannot; for it is with all my heart I give it you.

Str. I am satisfied.

Cla. And so am I, now it is once over.

Ran. And so am I, my dainty cousin; and I wish you joy of a man your whole sex would go to cuffs for, if they knew him but half so well as I do—Ha! she's here; this is more than I bargained for. [*Aside.*

JACINTHA *leads in Mrs* STRICTLAND.

Str. [*Embracing Mrs* STRICTLAND.] Madam, reproach me not with my folly, and you shall never hear of it again.

Mrs Str. Reproach you! no! if ever you hear the least reflection pass my lips, forsake me in that instant; or, what would yet be worse, suspect again.

Str. It is enough. I am ashamed to talk to thee. This letter, which I wrote to your brother, thus I tear in pieces, and with it part for ever with my jealousy.

Mrs Str. This is a joy indeed! as great as unexpected. Yet there is one thing wanting to make it lasting.

Ran. What the devil is coming now? [*Aside.*

Mrs Str. Be assured, every other suspicion of me was as unjust as your last; though, perhaps, you had more foundations for your fears.

Ran. She won't tell, sure, for her own sake. [*Aside.*

Mrs Str. All must be clear'd before my heart will be at ease.

Ran. It looks plaguy like it, though! [*Aside.*

Str. What mean you? I am all attention.

Mrs Str. There was a man, as you suspected, in my chamber last night.

Str. Ha! take care, I shall relapse.

Mrs Str. That gentleman was he——

Ran. Here is a devil for you! [*Aside.*

Mrs Str. Let him explain the rest.

Ran. A frolic! a mere frolic, on my life.

Str. A frolic! Zounds! [*They interpose.*

Ran. Nay, don't let us quarrel the very moment you declared yourself my friend. There was no harm done, I promise you. Nay, never frown. After I have told my story, any satisfaction you are pleased to ask, I shall be ready to give.

Str. Be quick, then, and ease me of my pain.

Ran. Why then, as I was strolling about last night, upon the look-out I must confess, chance, and chance only, convey'd me to your house, where I espied a ladder of ropes most invitingly fasten'd to the window——

Jac. Which ladder I had fastened for my escape.

Str. Proceed.

Ran. Up mounted I, and up I should have gone, if it had been in the garret; it's all one to Ranger. I open'd one door, then another, and, to my great surprise, the whole house was silent; at last, I stole into a room where this lady was undressing.

Str. 'Sdeath and the devil! you did not dare, sure——

Ran. I don't know whether I had dared, or no, if I had not heard the maid say something of her master's being jealous. Oh, damn me, thought I, then the work is half done to my hands.

Jac. Do you mind that, Mr Strictland?

Str. I do——I do most feelingly.

Ran. The maid grew saucy, and most conveniently to my wishes, was turn'd out of the room; and if you had not had the best wife in the world—

Str. 'Ounds, sir, but what right have you——

Ran. What right, sir? if you will be jealous of your wife without a cause; if you will be out at that time of night, when you might have been so much better employ'd at home; we young fellows think we have a right——

Str. No joking, I beseech you; you know not what I feel.

Ran. Then, seriously, I was mad, or drunk enough, call it which you will, to be very rude to this lady, for which I ask both her pardon and yours. I am an odd sort of a fellow, perhaps; but I am above telling you or any man a lie, damn me if I am not.

Str. I must, I cannot but believe you; and for the future, madam, you shall find a heart ready to love and trust you. No tears, I beg; I cannot bear them.

Mrs Str. I cannot speak, and yet there is a favour, sir——

Str. I understand you; and, as proof of the sincerity with which I speak, I beg it as a favour, of this lady in particular, [*To* CLARINDA.] and of all the company in general, to return to my house immediately, where every thing, Mr Bellamy, shall be settled to your entire satisfaction. No thanks, I have not deserved them.

J. Meg. I beg your pardon, sir; the fiddles are

ready; Mrs Bellamy has promised me her hand, and I won't part with one of you till midnight; and if you are as well satisfied as you pretend to be, let our friend Rattle here begin the ball with Mrs Strictland; for he seems to be the hero of the day.

Str. As you and the company please.

Ran. Why this is honest; continue but in this humour, and faith, sir, you may trust me to run about your house like a spaniel. I cannot sufficiently admire at the whimsicalness of my good fortune, in being so instrumental to this general happiness. Bellamy, Frankly, I wish you joy with all my heart, though I had rather you should be married than I, for all that. Never did Matrimony appear to me with a smile upon her face till this instant.

Sure joys for ever wait each happy pair,
When sense the man, and virtue crowns the fair,
And kind compliance proves their mutual care.

[*A dance.* *Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY MR GARRICK.

THOUGH the young smarts, I see, begin to sneer,
And the old sinners cast a wicked leer,
Be not alarm'd, ye fair—You've nought to fear.
No wanton hint, no loose ambiguous sense,
Shall flatter vicious taste at your expence.
Leaving, for once, these shameless arts in vogue,
We give a fable for the epilogue.
An ass there was, our author bade me say,
Who needs must write—He did—and wrote a play.
The parts were cast to various beasts and fowl;
Their stage a barn;——the manager an owl.
The house was cramm'd at six, with friends and foes;
Rakes, wits, and critics, citizens and beaux.
These characters appear'd in different shapes
Of tigers, foxes, horses, bulls, and apes;
With others, too, of lower rank and station:
A perfect abstract of the brute creation.
Each, as he felt, mark'd out the author's faults,
And thus the connoiseurs express'd their thoughts.
The critic-curs first snarl'd—the rules are broke,
Time, place, and action, sacrificed to joke.
The goats cried out, 'twas formal, dull, and chaste—
Nor writ for beasts of gallantry and taste,
The horned cattle were in piteous taking,
At fornication, rapes, and cuckold-making.
The tigers swore, he wanted fire and passion;
The apes condemn'd—because it was the fashion.
The generous steeds allow'd him proper merit;
Here mark'd his faults, and there approved his spirit.
While brother bards bray'd forth with usual spleen,
And, as they heard, exploded ev'ry scene.
When Reynard's thoughts were ask'd, the shrugging sage,
Famed for hypocrisy, and worn with age,
Condemn'd the shameless licence of the stage.
At which the monkey skipp'd from box to box,
And whisper'd round the judgment of the fox;
Abused the moderns, talk'd of Rome and Greece;
Bilk'd every box-keeper; and damn'd the piece.
Now ev'ry fable has a moral to it——
Be churchman, statesman, any thing——but poet.
In law, or physic, quack in what you will,
Cant and grimace conceal the want of skill;
Secure in these, his gravity may pass——
But here no artifice can hide the ass.

THE

WAY TO KEEP HIM.

BY

MURPHY.

PROLOGUE.

WHEN first the haughty critic's dreadful rage,
With Gothic fury, over-ran the stage,
Then prologues rose, and strove with varied art
To gain the soft accesses to the heart.
Thro' all the tuneful tribe th' infection flew,
And each great genius—his petition drew;
In *forma pauperis* address'd the pit,
With all the gay antithesis of wit.
Their sacred art poor poets own'd a crime;
They sigh'd in simile, they bow'd in rhime.
For charity they all were forced to beg;
And every "prologue was a wooden leg."
Next these a hardy, manly race appear'd,
Who knew no dulness, and no critics fear'd.
From Nature's store each curious tint they drew,
Then boldly held the piece to public view:
"Lo! here, exact proportion! just design!
The bold relief! and the unerring line!
Mark in soft union how the colours strike!
This, sirs, you will, or this you ought to like."
They bid defiance to the foes of wit,
"Scatter'd like ratsbane up and down the pit."
Such prologues were of yore;—our bard to-night
Disdains a false compassion to excite:
Nor too secure, your judgment would oppose;
He packs no jury, and he dreads no foes.
To govern here no party can expect;
An audience will preserve its own respect.
To catch the foibles, that misguide the fair,
From trifles spring, and end in lasting care,
Our author aims; nor this alone he tries,
But as fresh objects, and new manners rise,
He bids his canvass glow with various dyes;
Where sense and folly mix in dubious strife,
Alternate rise, and struggle into life.
Judge if with art the mimic strokes he blend;
If amicably light and shade contend;
The mental features if he trace with skill;
See the piece first, then damn it if you will.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

LOVEMORE.
Sir BASHFUL CONSTANT.
Sir BRILLIANT FASHION.
WILLIAM, *Servant to Lovemore.*
SIDEBOARD, *Servant to Sir Bashful.*
POMPEY, *a black Servant.*
JOHN.

WOMEN.

Mrs LOVEMORE.
The Widow BELLMOUR.
Lady CONSTANT.
MUSLIN, *Maid to Mrs Lovemore.*
MIGNIONET, *Maid to Mrs Bellmour.*
FURNISH, *Maid to Lady Constant.*

SCENE,—*London.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in* LOVEMORE'S *House.* WILLIAM *and* SIDEBOARD *discovered at a Game of Cards.*

Will. A plague go with it! I have turned out my game: Is forty-seven good?

Side. Equal.

Will. Confound the cards! tierce to a queen?

Side. Equal.

Will. There again! ruined, stock and block: nothing can save me. I don't believe there is a footman in England plays with worse luck than myself. Four aces are fourteen.

Side. That's hard, cruel by Jupiter! Aces against me every time.

Will. Four aces are fourteen: fifteen. [*Plays.*

Side. There's your equality.

Will. Very well: I turned out my point. Sixteen; [*Plays.*] seventeen. [*Plays.*]

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. There's a couple of you, indeed! You are so fond of the vices of your betters, that you are scarce out of your beds, but you must imitate them and their profligate ways. Set you up forsooth!

Will. Pr'ythee be quiet, woman, do. Eighteen. [*Plays.*

Mus. Upon my word!—With your usual ease, Mr Coxcomb.

Will. Manners, Mrs Muslin: you see Mr Sideboard here; he is just come on a message from Sir Bashful Constant. Have some respect for a stranger. Nineteen, clubs. [*Plays.*

Mus. It would become Mr Sideboard to go back with his answer, and it would become you to send my lady word——

Will. Command your tongue, Mrs Muslin: you'll put me out. What shall I play?—He will go back with his answer in good time. Let his master wait till it suits our conveniency. Nineteen, clubs: where shall I go now?

Mus. Have done with your folly, Mr Impertinent. My lady desires to know——

Will. I tell you, woman, my master and I desire to have nothing to do with you and your lady. Twenty, diamonds. [*Plays.*

Mus. But I tell you, Mr Brazen, that my lady desires to know at what hour your master came home last night, and how he does this morning?

Will. Ridiculous! Don't disturb us with that nonsense now; you see I am not at leisure. I and my master are resolved to be teased no more by you; and so, Mrs Go-between, you may return as you came. What the devil shall I play? We will have nothing to do with you, I tell you.

Mus. You'll have nothing to do with us? But you shall have to do with us, or I'll know the reason why. [*She snatches the cards from him, and throws them about.*

Will. Death and fury! this meddling woman has destroyed my whole game. A man might as well be married, as be treated in this fashion.

Side. I shall score you for this, Mr William: I was sure of the cards, and that would have made me up.

Will. No, you'll score nothing for this. You win too much off me. I am a very pretty annuity to you.

Side. Annuity, say you? I lose a fortune to you in the course of the year. How could you, Mrs Muslin, behave in this sort to persons of our dignity?

Mus. Decamp with your dignity; take your answer to your master: turn upon your rogue's heel, and rid the house.

Side. I sha'n't dispute with you. I hate wrangling: I leave that to lawyers and married people; they have nothing else to do. Mr William, I shall let Sir Bashful know that Mr Lovemore will be at home for him. When you come to our house, I'll give you your revenge. We can have a snug party there, and I promise you a glass of choice Champaigne: it happens to be a good batch; Sir Bashful gets none of it: I keep it for my own friends. *Au revoir.* [*Exit.*

Will. [*To* MUSLIN.] You see what mischief you have made.

Mus. Truce with your foolery; and now, sir, be so obliging as to send my lady an answer to her questions: How and when your rakehelly master came home last night?

Will. I'll tell you one thing, Mrs Muslin; you and my master will be the death of me at last. In the name of charity, what do you both take me for? Whatever appearances may be, I am but of mortal mould; nothing supernatural about me.

Mus. Upon my word, Mr Powder-Puff!

Will. I have not, indeed; and flesh and blood, let me tell you, cann't hold it always at this rate. I cann't be for ever a slave to Mr Lovemore's eternal frolics, and to your second-hand airs.

Mus. Second-hand airs!

Will. Yes, second-hand airs! you take them at your ladies' toilets with their cast gowns, and so you descend to us with them.—And then, on the other hand, there's my master!—Because he chooses to live upon the principal of his health, and so run out his whole stock as fast as he can, he must have my company with him in his devil's dance to the other world! Never at home till three, four, five, six in the morning.

Mus. Ay, a vile ungrateful man! always ranging abroad, and no regard for a wife that dotes upon him. And your love for me is all of a piece. I have no patience with you both; a couple of false, perfidious, abandoned profligates!

Will. Hey! where is your tongue running? My master, as the world goes, is a good sort of

a civil kind of a husband; and I, heaven help me! a poor simpleton of a constant, amorous puppy, who bears with all the whims of my little tyrant here. Come and kiss me, you jade, come and kiss me.

Mus. Paws off, Cæsar. Don't think to make me your dupe. I know when you go with him to this new lady, this Bath acquaintance; and I know you are as false as my master, and give all my dues to your Mrs Mignionet there.

Will. Hush! not a word of that. I am ruined, pressed, and sent on board a tender directly, if you blab that I trusted you with that secret. But to charge me with falsehood!—injustice and ingratitude!—My master, to be sure, does drink an agreeable dish of tea with the widow. He has been there every evening this month past. How long things are to be in this train, heaven only knows. But he does visit there, and I attend him. I ask my master, Sir, says I, what time will you please to want me? He fixes the hour, and I strut by Mrs Mignionet, without so much as tipping her a single glance. She stands watering at the mouth, and 'a pretty fellow that,' says she: Ay, gaze on, say I, gaze on: I know what you would be at: you would be glad to have me: but sour grapes, my dear; and so home I come, to cherish my own lovely little wanton: you know I do, and after toying with thee, I fly back to my master, later indeed than he appoints, but always too soon for him. He is loth to part: he lingers and dangles, and I stand cooling my heels. Oh! to the devil I pitch such a life!

Mus. Why don't you strive to reclaim the vile man?

Will. Softly; not so fast. I have my talent to be sure; yes, I must acknowledge some talent. But can you suppose that I have power to turn the drift of his inclinations? Can I give him a new taste, and lead him as I please? And to whom? To his wife? Ridiculous! A wife has no attraction now; the spring of the passions flies back; it won't do.

Mus. Fine talking! and you admire yourself for it, don't you? Can you proceed, sir?

Will. I tell you a wife is out of date: the time was, but that's all over: a wife is a drug now; mere tar-water, with every virtue under heaven, but nobody takes it.

Mus. Have done, or I'll print these ten nails upon your rogue's face.

Will. Come and kiss me, I say.

Mus. A fiddlestick for your kisses, while you encourage your master to open rebellion against the best of wives.

Will. I tell you 'tis all her own fault. Why does not she study to please him as you do me? Come and throw your arms about my neck.

Mus. As I used to do, Mr Impudence?

Will. Then I must force you to your own good. [*Kisses her.*] Pregnant with delight! egad, if my master was not in the next room— [*Bell rings.*

Mus. Hush! my lady's bell: how long has he been up?

Will. He has been up—[*Kisses her.*]—'Sdeath! you have set me all on fire. [*Kisses her.*

Mus. There, there; have done now; the bell rings again. What must I say? When did he come home?

Will. He came home—[*Kisses her.*]—he came home at five this morning; damned himself for a blockhead; [*Kisses.*] went to bed in a surly humour; was tired of himself and every body else; [*Bell rings, he kisses her.*] and he is now in tip-toe spirits with Sir Brilliant Fashion in that room yonder.

Mus. Sir Brilliant Fashion? I wish my lady would mind what he says to her—You great bear! you have given me such a flush in my face! [*Takes a pocket looking-glass.*] I look pretty well, I think. There [*Kisses him.*] have done, and let me be gone. [*Exit.*

Will. There goes high and low life contrasted in one person. She has not dived to the bottom of my master's secrets; that's one good thing. What she knows, she'll blab. We shall hear of this widow from Bath: but the plot lies deeper than they are aware of. Inquire they will; and let 'em, say I; their answer will do 'em no good. 'Mr Lovemore visit the widow Bellmour?' We know 'no such person.' That's what they'll get for their pains. Their puzzle will be greater than ever, and they may sit down to chew the cud of disappointed malice.—Hush! my master and Sir Brilliant: I'll take care of a single rogue, and get me out of their way. [*Exit.*

Enter LOVEMORE *and Sir* BRILLIANT.

Love. My dear Sir Brilliant, I must both pity and laugh at you. Thou art metamorphosed into the most whimsical being!

Sir Bril. If your raillery diverts you, go on with it. This is always the case: apply for sober advice, and your friend plays you off with a joke.

Love. Sober advice! very far gone indeed. There is no such thing as talking soberly to the tribe of lovers. That eternal absence of mind that possesses you all! There is no society with you. I was damnable company myself, when I was one of the pining herd: but a dose of matrimony has cooled me pretty handsomely; and here comes *repetatur haustus.*

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. My lady sends her compliments, and begs to know how you do this morning.

Love. [*Aside to Sir* BRIL.] The novelty of the compliment is enlivening—It is the devil to be teased in this manner.—What did you say, child?

Mus. My lady hopes you find yourself well this morning.

Love. Ay, your lady:—give her my compliments, and tell her—and tell her I hope she is well, and—— [*Yawns.*

Mus. She begs you won't think of going out without seeing her.

Love. To be sure, she has such variety every

time one sees her—my head aches wofully—tell your lady—I shall be glad to see her; I'll wait on her—[*Yawns*] tell her what you will.

Mus. A brute!—I shall let my lady know, sir. [*Exit.*

Love. My dear Sir Brilliant, you see me an example before your eyes. Put the widow Bellmour out of your head, and let my Lord Etheridge be the victim for you.

Sir Bril. Positively no; my pride is piqued. My Lord Etheridge shall find me a more formidable rival than he imagines. By the way, how long has the noble peer been in England?

Love. His motions are unknown to me.—[*Aside.*] I don't like that question.—His lordship is in France, is not he?

Sir Bril. No; he is certainly returned. The match is to be concluded privately. He visits her *incog.*

Love. [*Forcing a laugh.*] Oh! no; that cann't be; my Lord Etheridge loves parade. I cannot help laughing. The jealousy of you lovers is for ever conjuring up phantoms to torment yourselves. My dear Sir Brilliant, wait for realities; there are enough in life, and you may teach your fancy to be at rest, and give you no further trouble.

Sir Bril. Nay, don't let your fancy run away with you. What I tell you, is the real truth.

Love. Well, if it be true, and if Lord Etheridge is come to England to marry, do you go to France not to marry, and you will have the best of the bargain.

Enter WILLIAM.

Will. Sir Bashful Constant is in his chariot at the upper end of the street, and if your honour is at leisure, he will wait upon you.

Love. Have not I sent him word I should be at home? Let him come as soon as he will. [*Exit* WILLIAM.] Another instance, Sir Brilliant, to deter you from all thoughts of matrimony.

Sir Bril. Po! hang him; he is no precedent for me. A younger brother, who lived in middling life, comes to a title and an estate on the death of a consumptive baronet; marries a woman of quality, and now carries the primitive ideas of his narrow education into high life. Don't you remember when he had chambers in Fig-tree-court, and used to saunter and lounge away his time in Temple coffee-houses? The fellow is as dull as a bill in Chancery.

Love. But he is improved since that time.

Sir Bril. Impossible; don't you see how he goes on? He knows nothing of the world; if his eyes meet yours, he blushes up to his ears, and looks suspicious, as if he imagined you had a design upon him.

Love. I can explain that part of his character. He has a mortal aversion to wit and raillery, and dreads nothing so much as being laughed at for being particular.

Sir Bril. And so, fearing to be ridiculous, he becomes substantially so every moment.

Love. Even so, and if you look at him, he shrinks back from your observation, casting a sly, slow, jealous eye all round him, like Miss Bumpkin in a country village, awkwardly endeavouring to conceal what the increase of her shape discovers to the whole parish.

Sir Bril. And then his behaviour to his lady!

Love. Why, as to that point, I don't think he hates her. His fear of ridicule may be at the bottom. He has strange notions about the dignity of a husband. There is a secret, which he would fain tell me, and yet he is shy, and he hints, and he hesitates, and then he retreats back into himself, and ends just where he began. But with all his faults, he has fits of good-nature.—There,—his chariot's at the door.

Sir Bril. Lady Constant, you mean, has fits of good-nature. Have you made any progress there?

Love. That's well from you, who are the formidable man in that quarter.

Sir Bril. Oh! no; positively, no pretence, no colour for it.

Love. Don't I know that you have made advances?

Sir Bril. Advances! I pity my Lady Constant, and——

Love. Well, that's generous—Hush! I hear him coming. Sir Brilliant, I admire your amorous charity of all things!

Enter Sir BASHFUL CONSTANT.

Sir Bash. Mr Lovemore, I have taken the liberty—but you seem to be busy, and I intrude perhaps.

Love. Oh, by no means: walk in, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. Sir Brilliant, I am glad to see you. [*Bows awkwardly.*

Sir Bril. You do me honour, sir. I hope you left my lady well.

Sir Bash. I cann't say, sir; I am not her physician.

Sir Bril. [*Aside.*] An absurd brute!—Lovemore, I'll just step and pay a short visit to our friend over the way.

Love. Why in such a hurry?

Sir Bril. I shall return immediately. I'll be with you before you are dressed. Sir Bashful, I kiss your hand. [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. I am glad he is gone. I have something, Mr Lovemore, that I want to advise with you about.

Love. Have you?

Sir Bash. I have had another brush with my wife.

Love. I am sorry for it, Sir Bashful.—[*Aside.*] I am perfectly glad of it.

Sir Bash. Pretty warm the quarrel was. She took it in a high tone. Sir Bashful, says she, I wonder you will disgrace yourself at this rate. You know my pin-money is not sufficient. The mercer and every body dunning me! I cann't go on after this fashion, says she, and then something about her quality. You know, Mr Lovemore, [*Smiling.*] she is a woman of high quality.

Love. Yes, and a very fine woman.

Sir Bash. No, no, no; not mush of that—and

yet—[*Looks at him and smiles.*] Do you think her a fine woman?

Love. Undoubtedly; where do you see any body that outshines her?

Sir Bash. Why to be sure—[*Smiling.*] one does not often see her eclipsed. I think she is what you may call a fine woman. She keeps good company.

Love. The very best.

Sir Bash. Yes, yes; your tiptop, none else.—And yet to encourage her too far were dangerous. Too complying a husband makes but a sorry figure in the eyes of the world.

Love. The world will talk, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. Too fast, Mr Lovemore. Their tongues will run on, and one does not like to give them a subject. I answered her stoutly: Madam, says I, a fig for your quality: I am master in my own house, and who do you think—[*Winks at* LOVEMORE.] putting myself in a passion, you know—Who do you think is to pay for your cats and your dogs, and your monkeys, and your squirrels, and your gaming debts?

Love. How could you? That was sharply said.

Sir Bash. Yes; I gave it her. But for all that I am main good-natured at the bottom.

Love. You was not earnest then?

Sir Bash. No, no; that's the point; a man must keep up his own dignity. I'll tell you what I did.

Love. Well;—you did what's proper, I dare say.

Sir Bash. I hope you'll think so.—Don't laugh at me.——Come, I will tell you. I went to her mercer slily, and paid him the money. [*Smiling.*

Love. Did you?

Sir Bash. [*Looking alarmed.*] Was it not right?

Love. It was elegant.

Sir Bash. I am glad you approve. I took care to save appearances. One would not have the world know it.

Love. By no means.

Sir Bash. It would make them think me too uxorious.

Love. So it would—[*Aside.*] I must encourage that notion. While you live, guard against being too uxorious. Though our wives deserve our fondness, the world will laugh at us;—and, hark ye, if our wives don't deserve it, they'll laugh at us the more.

Sir Bash. I know it. And so, says I, Mr Lutestring, there's your money, but tell no body that I paid it slily.

Love. Why, that's doing a genteel thing by stratagem.—Admirably contrived!

Sir Bash. I think it was. But I have a deeper secret for you.

Love. Have you?

Sir Bash. I have.—May I trust you?

Love. Now there you hurt me. I feel that, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. I beg your pardon. I know you are my friend. I have great confidence in you. You must know—look ye, Mr Lovemore—you must know——

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. My lady desires to know if you choose a dish of tea this morning.

Love. Po! ridiculous!—tell your mistress—go about your business. [*Turns her out.*

Sir Bash. I see how it is. He does not care a cherry-stone for his wife.

Love. Such impertinence!——Well, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. He does not value her a pinch of snuff. [*Aside.*

Love. Well, I am all attention.

Sir Bash. It does not signify. A foolish affair; I won't trouble you.

Love. Nay, that's unkind. It will be no trouble.

Sir Bash. Well, well, I—I—Do you think Muslin did not overhear us?

Love. Not a syllable. Come, we are safe.

Sir Bash. I don't know but—let me ask you a question first.——Have you any regard for your lady?

Love. The highest value for her. But then you know appearances——

Sir Bash. Right!—I repose it with you.—You must know, Mr Lovemore, as I told you, I am at the bottom very good-natured, and though it may be thought——we are interrupted again.

Enter Sir BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. Lovemore, I have paid my visit.

Love. Pshaw!—this is unlucky——You are as good as your word, Sir Brilliant.

Sir Bril. Perhaps you have business?

Sir Bash. No, no business—[*Turns to* LOVEMORE.] there's no proceeding now—I was going too, Sir Brilliant. Mr Lovemore, I wish you a good day.

Love. Po! Pr'ythee, you sha'n't leave me yet.

Sir Bash. I must; I cann't stay. [*Aside to* LOVEMORE.] Another time. Suppose you call at my house at one o'clock.

Love. With all my heart.

Sir Bash. Do so; nobody shall interrupt us.—Mr Lovemore, I take my leave. Sir Brilliant, I kiss your hand. You won't forget, Mr Lovemore?

Love. Oh! no; depend upon me.

Sir Bash. A good morning. He is the only friend I have. [*Exit.*

Love. Ha, ha! you broke in in the most critical moment. He was just going to be delivered of his secret.

Sir Bril. I beg your pardon. How could you let me?

Love. Nay, no matter. I shall worm it out of him.

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. My lady, sir, is quite impatient.

Love. Po! for ever teasing! I'll wait upon her presently. [*Exit* MUSLIN.

Sir Bril. I'll step and chat with her while you dress. May I take the liberty?

Love. You know you may: no ceremony. How could you ask me such a question?——Apropos, Sir Brilliant, I want a word with you. Step with me into the study for a moment.

Sir Bril. I attend you.

Love. Poor Sir Bashful?——ha, ha!——a ridiculous, unaccountable——What does he mean?

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Another Apartment.* *Mrs* LOVEMORE *at her Tea-Table.*

Mrs Love. This trash of tea'! I don't know why I drink so much of it. Heigho!—What keeps Muslin? Surely never was an unhappy woman treated with such cruel indifference; nay, with such open, such undisguised insolence of gallantry.

Enter MUSLIN.

Mrs Love. Well, Muslin, have you seen his prime minister?

Mus. Yes, ma'am, I have seen Mr William.—He says his master is going out, according to the old trade, and he does not expect to see him again till to-morrow morning. Mr Lovemore is now in the study. Sir Brilliant Fashion is with him: I heard them, as I passed by the door, laughing as loud as two actors in a comedy.

Mrs Love. About some precious mischief, I'll be sworn, and all at my cost. Heigho!

Mus. Dear ma'am, why chagrin yourself about a vile man, that is not worth——no, as I hope for mercy, not worth a single sigh?

Mrs Love. What can I do, Muslin?

Mus. Do, ma'am!—if I was as you, I'd do for him. If I could not cure my grief, I'd find some comfort, that's what I would.

Mrs Love. Comfort! alas! there is none for me.

Mus. And whose fault then? Would any body but you——It provokes me to think of it——Would any but you,—young, handsome, with wit, graces, talents,—would any body, with so many accomplishments, sit at home here as melancholy as a poor servant out of place?——And all for what? For a husband! And such a husband!—What do you think the world will say of you, ma'am?

Mrs Love. I care not what they say, I am tired of the world, and the world may be tired of me, if it will. My troubles are to myself only, and I must endeavour to bear them. Who knows what patience may do? If Mr Lovemore has any feeling left, my conduct and his own heart may one day incline him to do me justice.

Mus. But, dear ma'am, that's waiting for dead men's shoes. Incline him to do you justice!—What signifies expecting and expecting? Give me a bird in the hand. If all the women in London, who happen to be in your case, were to sit down and die of the spleen, what would become of the public places? They might turn Vauxhall to a hop-garden; make a brewhouse of Ranelagh, and let both the playhouses to a methodist-preacher. We should not have the racketting we have now. John, let the horses be put to——John, go to my Lady Trumpabout, and invite her to a small party of twenty or thirty card tables.——John, run to my Lady Catgut, and let her know I'll wait upon her ladyship to the opera.——John, run as fast as ever you can, with my compliments to Mr Varney, and tell him it will be the death of me, if I have not a box for the new play. Lord bless you, ma'am, they rantipole it about this town, with as unconcerned looks, and as florid outsides, as if they were treated at home like so many goddesses; though every body knows possession has ungoddessed them all long ago, and their husbands care no more for them, no, by jingo, no more than they care for their husbands.

Mrs Love. At what a rate you run on!

Mus. It is enough to make a body run on. If every body thought like you, ma'am——

Mrs Love. If every body loved like me!

Mus. A brass thimble for love, if it is not returned by love. What the deuce is here to do? Love for love is something: but to love alone, where's the good of that? Shall I go and fix my heart upon a man, who shall despise me for that very reason? And ay, says he, 'poor fool! I see she adores me. The woman is well enough, only she has one inconvenient circumstance about her; I am married to her, and marriage is the devil.'

Mrs Love. Will you have done?

Mus. I have not half done, ma'am. And when the vile man goes a roguing, he smiles impudently in your face, 'and I am going to the chocolate-house, my dear; amuse yourself in the meantime, my love.' Fye upon 'em! I know 'em all. Give me a husband that will enlarge the circle of my innocent pleasures: but a husband now-a-days is no such thing. A husband now is nothing but a scare-crow, to shew you the fruit, but touch it if you dare. The devil's in 'em, the Lord forgive me for swearing! A husband is a mere bugbear, a snap-dragon, a monster; that is to say, if one makes him so, then he is a monster indeed; and if one do not make him so, then he behaves like a monster; and of the two evils, by my troth——But here, ma'am, here comes one who can tell you all about it. Here comes Sir Brilliant: ask his advice, ma'am.

Mrs Love. His advice?——Ask advice of the man, who has estranged Mr Lovemore's affections from me?

Mus. Well, I protest and vow, I think Sir Brilliant a very pretty gentleman. He is the very pink of the fashion. He dresses fashionably, lives fashionably, wins your money fashionably, loses his own fashionably, and does every thing fashionably; and then he looks so lively, and so much to say, and so never at a loss!——but here he comes.

Enter Sir BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. Mrs Lovemore, my dear ma'am, always in a vis-a-vis party with your *suivante?*—Afford me your pardon, if I say this does a little wear the appearance of being out of humour with the world.

Mrs Love. Far from it, Sir Brilliant. We were engaged in your panegyric.

Sir Bril. My panegyric? Then am I come most apropos to give the portrait a few finishing touches. Mr Lovemore, as soon as he is dressed, will wait upon you: in the meantime, I can help you to some anecdotes, which will enable you to colour your canvass a little higher.

Mrs Love. Among those anecdotes, I hope you will not omit the bright exploit of seducing Mr Lovemore from all domestic happiness.

[*She makes a sign to* MUSLIN *to go.*

Sir Bril. I, madam?—Let me perish if ever—

Mrs Love. Oh! sir, I can make my observations.

Sir Bril. May fortune eternally forsake me, and beauty frown on me, if I am conscious of any plot upon earth.

Mrs Love. Don't assert too strongly, Sir Brilliant.

Sir Bril. May I never throw a winning cast—

Mrs Love. It is in vain to deny it, sir.

Sir Bril. May I lose the next sweepstakes, if I have ever, in thought, word, or deed, been accessary to his infidelity. I alienate the affections of Mr Lovemore! Consider, madam, how would this tell in Westminster Hall? Sir Brilliant Fashion, what say you? Guilty of this indictment or not guilty? Not guilty, poss. Thus issue is joined. You enter the court: but, my dear madam, veil those graces that adorn your person: abate the fire of those charms: so much beauty will corrupt the judges: give me a fair trial.

Mrs Love. And thus you think to laugh it away.

Sir Bril. Nay, hear me out. You appear in court: you charge the whole upon me, without a syllable as to the how, when, and where: no proof positive; the prosecution ends, and I begin my defence.

Mrs Love. And by playing these false colours, you think I am to be amused?

Sir Bril. Nay, Mrs Lovemore, I am now upon my defence. Only hear.—You will please to consider, gentlemen of the jury, that Mr Lovemore is not a minor, nor I his guardian. He loves gaiety, pleasure, and enjoyment: is it my fault? He is possessed of talents and a taste for pleasure, which he knows how to gratify: can I restrain him? He knows the world, makes the most of life, and plucks the fruit that grows around him: am I to blame? This is the whole affair.—How say you, gentlemen of the jury?—Not guilty. There, you see how it is. I have cleared myself.

Mrs Love. Brisk, lively, and like yourself, Sir Brilliant! But if you can imagine this bantering way—

Sir Bril. Acquitted by my country, ma'am; fairly acquitted.

Mrs Love. After the very edifying counsel which you give to Mr Lovemore, this loose strain is not in the least surprising. And, sir, your late project—

Sir Bril. My late project!

Mrs Love. Your late project, sir. Not content with leading Mr Lovemore into a thousand scenes of dissipation, you have introduced him lately to your mistress Bellmour. You understand me, sir.

Sir Bril. Ma'am, he does not so much as know the Widow Bellmour.

Mrs Love. Nay, Sir Brilliant, have a care; justify it if you can, or give it a turn of wit. There is no occasion to hazard yourself too far.

Sir Bril. Falsehood I disdain, madam, and I, Sir Brilliant Fashion, declare, that Mr Lovemore is not acquainted with the Widow Bellmour. And if he was, what then? Do you know the lady?

Mrs Love. I know her, sir? A person of that character?

Sir Bril. Oh!—I see you don't know her; but I will let you into her history.—Pray be seated—you shall know her whole history, and then judge for yourself. The Widow Bellmour, madam—

Love. [*Within.*] William, are the horses put to?

Sir Bril. We are interrupted.

Enter LOVEMORE.

Love. Very well: let the carriage be brought round directly.—How do you do, my dear?—Sir Brilliant, I beg you pardon.—My love, you don't answer me: how do you do this morning?

[*With an air of cold civility.*

Mrs Love. A little indisposed in mind: but indisposition of the mind is of no consequence: nobody pities it.

Love. I beg your pardon, Mrs Lovemore. Indisposition of the mind—Sir Brilliant, that's a mighty pretty ring on your finger.

Sir Bril. A bauble: will you look at it?

[*Gives the ring*

Mrs Love. Though I have but few obligations to Sir Brilliant, I suppose I am to ascribe to him the favour of this visit, Mr Lovemore.

Love. [*Looking at the ring, and laughing.*] Now there you wrong me.—Your inquiries about my health have been very obliging this morning, and I came to return the compliment before I got out.—It is set very neatly. [*Gives back the ring.*

Mrs Love. Are you going out, sir?

Love. A matter of business—How I do hate business!—But business, [*Examining his ruffles*] —business must be done.—Pray is there any news? —Any news, my dear?

Mrs Love. It would be news to me, sir, if you would be kind enough to let me know whether I may expect the favour of your company at dinner to-day.

Love. It would be impertinent in me to answer such a question, for I can give no direct answer to it. I am the slave of events; just as things happen; perhaps I may; perhaps not. But don't let me be of any inconvenience to you. Is it material where a body eats?—Have you heard what happened to me? [*Aside to Sir* BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. When and where?

Love. A word in your ear—with your permission, ma'am?

Mrs Love. That cold, contemptuous civility, Mr Lovemore——

Love. Po! pr'ythee now, how can you?—that is very peevish, and very ill-natured. [*Turning to Sir* BRIL.] I lost every thing I played for after

you went. The foreigner and he understand one another.—I beg your pardon, Mrs Lovemore: it was only about an affair at the opera.

Mrs Love. The opera, or any thing, is more agreeable than my company.

Love. Now there again you wrong me. [*To Sir* BRILLIANT.] We dine at the St Alban's. How can you, Mrs Lovemore? I make it a point not to incommode you. You possibly may have some private party; and it would be unpolite in me to obstruct your schemes of pleasure. Would not it, Sir Brilliant?

Sir Bril. Oh!—Gothic to the last degree!

Love. Very true; vulgar and mechanic! [*Both stand laughing.*

Mrs Love. Go on; make sport for yourselves, gentlemen.

Love. Ho! ho! ho! I am sore with laughing. If you, madam, have arranged an agreeable party, for me to be present, it would look as if we lived together like Sir Bashful Constant and his lady; who are always, like two game-cocks, ready armed to goad and spur one another. Hey! Sir Brilliant?

Sir Bril. Oh! the very thing: or like Sir Theodore Traffic at Tunbridge, taking his wife under the arm in the public rooms, and 'come along home, I tell you.'

Love. Exactly so. [*Both continue laughing.*] Odds my life! I shall be beyond my time. [*Looks at his watch.*] Any commands into the city, my dear?

Mrs Love. Commands!—no, sir, I have no commands.

Love. I have an appointment at my banker's, Sir Brilliant, you know old Discount?

Sir Bril. He that was in parliament, and had the large contract?

Love. The same: Entire Butt, I think, was the name of his borough. Can I set you down?

Sir Bril. No, my carriage waits. I shall rattle half the town over presently.

Love. As you will. Sir Brilliant will entertain you, ma'am. *Au revoir*, my love. Sir Brilliant, yours. Who waits there? [*Exit singing.*

Sir Bril. Bon voyage. You see, madam, that I don't deprive you of his company.

Mrs Love. Your influence is now unnecessary. It is grown habitual to him: he will drive to your Mrs Bellmour, I suppose.

Sir Bril. Apropos; that brings us back to the little history I was going to give you of that lady. What is your charge against her? That she is amiable? Granted. Young, gay, rich, handsome, with enchanting talents, it is no wonder all the pretty fellows are on their knees to her. Her manner so entertaining! that quickness of transition from one thing to another! that round of variety! and every new attitude does so become her; and she has such a feeling heart, and, with an air of giddiness, so nice a conduct!

Mrs Love. Mighty well, sir: she is a very vestal. Finish your portrait. A vestal from your school of painting must be a curiosity. But how comes it, sir, if she is this wonder, that your honourable proposals are at an end there?

Sir Bril. Compulsion, ma'am: it is not voluntary. My Lord Etheridge is the happy man. I thought he was out of the kingdom; but his lordship is with her every evening. I can scarce gain admittance; and so all that remains for me, is to do justice to the lady, and console myself in the best way I can for the insufficiency of my pretensions.

Mrs Love. Am I to believe all this?

Sir Bril. May the first woman I pay my addresses to, strike me to the centre with a supercilious eyebrow, if every syllable is not minutely true. So that, you see, I am not the cause of your inquietude. There is not in the world a person, who more earnestly aspires to prove the tender esteem he bears you. I have long panted for an opportunity—by all that's soft, she listens to me! [*Aside.*]—I have long panted, ma'am, for a tender moment like this—

Mrs Love. [*Looking gravely at him.*] Sir!

Sir Bril. I have panted with all the ardour, which charms like yours must kindle in every heart!—

Mrs Love. [*Walks away.*] This liberty, sir—

Sir Bril. Consider, madam: we have both cause of discontent; both disappointed; both crossed in love; and the least we can do is both to join, and sweeten each other's cares.

Mrs Love. And your friend, sir, who has just left you——

Sir Bril. He, madam, for a long time—I have seen it, with vexation seen it,—yes, he has long been false to honour, love, and you.

Mrs Love. Sir Brilliant, I have done. You take my wrongs too much to heart, sir. [*Rings a bell.*

Sir Bril. Those eyes that tell us what the sun is made of, those hills of driven snow!

Mrs Love. Will nobody answer there?

Enter MUSLIN.

Sir Bril. Madam, I desist: when you are in better humour, recollect what I have said. Your adorer takes his leave.—Sir Brilliant, mind your hits, and her strait-laced virtue will surrender at last.—Madam—— [*Bows respectfully. Exit.*

Mus. As I live and breathe, ma'am, if I was as you, I would not fluster myself about it.

Mrs Love. About what?

Mus. What signifies mincing the matter? I heard it all.

Mrs Love. You did, did you? [*Looks angrily.*

Mus. Ma'am?

Mrs Love. Impertinence! [*Walks about.*] Oh! Mr Lovemore!—To make his character public, and render him the topic of every tea-table throughout this town! I must avoid that.

Mus. What the deuce is here to do?—An unmannerly thing, for to go for to huff me in this manner! [*Aside.*

Mrs Love. That would only widen the breach, and instead of neglect, might call forth resentment, and settle at last into a fixed aversion:

lawyers, parting, and separate maintenance!—What must be done?

Mus. What is she thinking of now?—A sulky thing, not to be more familiar with such a friend as I am. Did you speak to me, ma'am?

Mrs Love. It may succeed; suppose I try it. Muslin.

Mus. Ma'am. [*Running to her.*

Mrs Love. You heard Sir Brilliant say that Mr Lovemore is not acquainted with the widow?

Mus. Lard, ma'am, he's as full of tricks as a French milliner. I know he does visit there: I know it from William. I'll be hanged in my own garters, if he does not.

Mrs Love. I know not what to do. Let my chair be got ready.

Mus Your chair, ma'am!—Are you going out?

Mrs Love. Let me hear no more questions: do as I order you. [*Exit.*

Mus. Which way is the wind now? No matter; she does not know what she'd be at. If she would but take my advice,—go abroad, visit every where, see the world, throw open her doors, give balls, assemblies, concerts; sing, dance, dress, spend all her money, run in debt, ruin her husband; there would be some sense in that: the man would stay at home then to quarrel with her. She would have enough of his company. But no; mope, mope for ever; heigho! tease, tease; Muslin, step to William; where's his master? When did he come home? How long has he been up? A fine life truly. I love to be in the fashion, for my part. Bless me, I had like to have forgot. Mrs Marmalet comes to my rout to-night. She might as well stay away: she is nothing but mere lumber. The formal thing won't play higher than shilling whist. How the devil does she think I can make a shilling party for her? There is no such a thing now-a-days: nobody plays shilling whist now, unless I was to invite the trades-people; but I sh'a'nt let myself down for Madam Marmalet, that I promise her. [*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment at Sir* BASHFUL CONSTANT'S.

Enter Sir BASHFUL.

Sir Bash. Did not I hear a rap at the door? Yes, yes, I did; I am right. The carriage is just now driving away. Who answers there? Sideboard; step hither, Sideboard. I must know who it is: my wife keeps the best company in England. Hold, I must be wary. Servants love to pry into their masters' secrets.

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Sir Bash. Whose carriage was that at the door?

Side. The duchess of Hurricane, your honour.

Sir Bash. The Duchess of Hurricane? [*Walks aside and smiles.*] A woman of great rank!—What did she want?

Side. She has left this card for my lady.

Sir Bash. A card? Let me see it. [*Reads.*] "The Duchess of Hurricane presents compliments to Lady Constant. She has left the hounds and the foxes, and the brutes that gallop after them, to their own dear society for the rest of the winter. Her grace keeps Wednesdays at Hurricane House for the rest of the winter."—Make me thankful, here's a card from a duchess!—what have you there?

Side. A parcel of cards, that have been left here this morning.

Sir Bash. All these in one morning? [*Looks at them.*] Why I may as well keep an inn; may as well keep the Coach and Horses in Piccadilly. [*Reads fast.*] "Lady Riot—Mrs Allnight—The Duchess of Carmine"—look ye there, another duchess! "Lady Basset—Lord Pleurisie—the Countess of Ratific—Sir Richard Lungs—Lord Laudanum—Sir Charles Valerian—Lady Hectick—Lady Mary Gabble"—I cann't bear all this, Sideboard—[*Aside and smiling.*] I cann't bear the pleasure of it: all people of tip-top condition to visit my wife!

Enter FURNISH.

Sir Bash. What's the matter, Furnish?

Fur. The matter, sir?—Nothing's the matter.

Sir Bash. What are you about? Where are you going? What have you to do now?

Fur. Only to tell the chairmen they must take Black George with his flambeau with them this evening, and carry the chair to pay visits for my lady.

Sir Bash. An empty chair to pay visits!—what polite ways people of fashion have got of being intimate with each other!—[*Aside.*] Absurd as it is, I am glad to see my wife keep pace with the best of them. I laugh at it, and yet I like it. Wounds! I shall be found out by my servants. I tell you, Sideboard, and you, Mrs Busy Body, that your mistress leads a life of noise and hurry, and cards and dice, and vanity and nonsense, and I am resolved to bear it no longer.—Don't I hear her coming?

Fur. My lady is coming, sir.

Sir Bash. [*Aside and smiling.*] She looks charmingly.—Now I'll tell her roundly a piece of my mind. You shall see who commands in this house.

Enter Lady CONSTANT.

Sir Bash. [*Steals a look.*] I could almost give up the point when I look at her.—So, madam, I have had my house full of duns again to-day.

Lady Cons. Obliging creatures, to call so often! What did they want?

Sir Bash. Want!—what should they want but money?

Lady Cons. And you paid them, I suppose?

Sir Bash. You suppose!—'Sdeath, madam, what do you take me for?

Lady Cons. I took you for a husband: my brother prescribed you. But his prescription has done me no good.

Sir Bash. Nor me either: I have had a bitter pill of it.

Lady Cons. But the pill was gilded for you.—My fortune, I take it, has paid off the old family mortgage on your estate.

Sir Bash. And at the rate you go on, a new mortgage will swallow up my estate.—I see you are an ungrateful woman.

Lady Cons. That is, as you keep the account.

Sir Bash. And my accounts will shew it. Day after day nothing but extravagance to gratify your vanity. Did not I go into parliament to please you? Did not I go down to the Borough of Smoke-and-Sot, and get drunk there for a whole month together? Did not I get mobbed at the George and Vulture? and pelted and horsewhipped the day before the election? And was not I obliged to steal out of the town in a rabbit-cart? And all this to be somebody, as you call it? Did not I stand up in the house to make a speech, to shew what an orator you had married? And did not I expose myself? Did I know whether I stood upon my head or my heels for half an hour together? And did not a great man from the Treasury-bench tell me never to speak again?

Lady Cons. And why not take his advice?

Sir Bash. What, in the name of common sense, had I to do in parliament? My country! what's my country to me? The debts of the nation, and your gaming debts, are nothing to me. I must help to pay both, must I? I can vote against taxes, and I can advertise in the gazette to secure me from your extravagance. I have not lived in the Temple for nothing

Fur. He slept there, and calls it studying the law.

Sir Bash. Hold you your tongue, Mrs Pert: leave the room. Go both about your business.

[*Exeunt* FURNISH *and* SIDEBOARD.

[*Aside.*] I have kept it up before my servants.—[*Looks at Lady* CONSTANT.] She is a fine woman after all.

Lady Cons. Is there never to be an end of this usage, sir? Am I to be for ever made unhappy by your humours?

Sir Bash. Humours! good sense and sound judgment, in the fine lady's dictionary, are to be called humours?

Lady Cons. And your humours are now grown insupportable.

Sir Bash. Your profusion is insupportable. At the rate you go on, how am I to find money for my next election?—If you would but talk this matter over coolly—She talks like an angel, and I wish I could say [*Aside.*] the same of myself.—What will the world think?—Only command your temper—what will they think, if I am seen to encourage your way of life?

Lady Cons. Amuse yourself that way, sir.—Avoid one error, and run into the opposite extreme.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] There; a translation from Horace! *Dum vitant stulti vitia*—She is a notable woman.

Lady Cons. Let me tell you, there is not in life a more ridiculous sight than the person who guards, with imaginary wisdom, against one giant-vice, and leaves himself open to a million of absurdities.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] I am nothing to her in argument—she has a tongue that can reason me out of my senses.—I could almost find it in my heart to tell her the whole truth.—You know, my lady Constant, that when you want any thing in reason——

Lady Cons. Is it unreasonable to live with decency? Is it unreasonable to keep the company my rank and education have entitled me to? Is it unreasonable to conform to the modes of life, when your fortune can so well afford it?

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] She is a very reasonable woman, and I wish I had but half her sense.—You know I'm good-natured in the main, and if a sum of money within a moderate compass—If a brace of hundreds—[*Aside.*] why should not I make it three?—I know that you have contracted habits of life, and [*In a softened tone.*] habit, I know, is not easily conquered: and if three [*Smiling.*] hundred pounds will prevent disputes, why [*Smiling.*] as to the matter of three hundred pounds——

Enter FURNISH, *with a band-box.*

Fur. Your ladyship's things from the milliner's.

Sir Bash. Death and fury! this woman has overheard me. Three hundred pounds, madam! [*In a violent passion.*] let me tell you that three hundred pounds—what right have you to shovel away three hundred pounds?

Lady Cons. Why does the man fly out into such a passion?

Sir Bash. I will allow no such doings in my house. Don't I often come when my hall is besieged with a parcel of powder-monkey servants? And did not I the other day, before I could get into my own doors, entangle myself among the chairmen's poles, and was not I confined there, like a man in the stocks?

Lady Cons. Why would you be so awkward?

Sir Bash. An eternal scene of routs and drums. Have not I seen you put the fee simple of a score of my best acres upon a single card? And have not I muttered to myself, if that woman was as much in love with me as she is with Pam, what an excellent wife she would make?

Lady Cons. Pam is very obliging: why won't you strive to be as agreeable?

Sir Bash. 'Sdeath, madam, you are so fond of play, that I should not wonder to see my next child marked on the forehead with a pair royal of aces.

Fur. I am sure you deserve to be marked on the forehead with a pair of——

Sir Bash. Malapert hussy! do you meddle? Begone this moment. [*Exit* FURNISH.

Lady Cons. Fy upon it, Sir Bashful! I am tired of blushing for you.

Sir Bash. I am afraid I have gone too far: she is ashamed of me. [*Aside.*

Lady Cons. You agreed to a separation the other day, and there remains nothing but to execute articles, and make an end of all this disquiet.

Sir Bash. A separate maintenance will go but a little way to answer the bawling of milliners, mercers, jewellers, and gaming debts.

Lady Cons. It will purchase content, and nothing can obtain that under your roof.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] I have shot my bolt too far—I fancy, my Lady Constant, that you don't know me. We might explain matters, and—'Sdeath! [*Aside.*] I am going to blab—I say, madam, if you understood me rightly—as to the authority of a husband, I might, perhaps, be brought to give it up, in part at least; and if nobody was the wiser, I might connive—Po! confusion! interrupted again by that—

Enter FURNISH.

Fur. A servant from Mrs Lovemore, madam, to know—

Sir Bash. The authority of a husband I never will give up.

Lady Cons. A storm, a whirlwind is fitter to converse with!

Sir Bash. I will storm like a whirlwind in my own house. I have done, madam; you are an ungovernable woman—[*Aside and smiling.*] She is a charming woman, and if nobody saw it, I would let her govern me with all my heart. [*Exit.*

Lady Cons. Did any body ever see such behaviour?

Fur. Never; and how your ladyship bears it, I cann't tell.

Lady Cons. That it should be my fate to be married to such a quicksand! What does Mrs Lovemore say?

Fur. If your ladyship will be at home, she intends to do herself the pleasure of waiting upon you, madam.

Lady Cons. Very well; I shall be at home,—Upon recollection, I want to see her. Let the servant wait: I'll write an answer. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Another Apartment.*

Enter Sir BASHFUL *and* LOVEMORE.

Sir Bash. Walk in, Mr Lovemore, walk in. I am heartily glad to see you. This is kind.

Love. I am ready, you see, to attend the call of friendship.

Sir Bash. Mr Lovemore, you are a friend indeed.

Love. You do me honour, Sir Bashful. And your lady, how does she do?

Sir Bash. Perfectly well: in great spirits.—[*Smiling at* LOVEMORE.] I never saw her look better: but we have had t'other skirmish since I saw you.

Love. Another?

Sir Bash. Ay, another; and I did not bate her an ace. She is a rare one to argue. She is fit to discuss a point with any man.—Nobody like her. Wit at will. I thought I managed the dispute, and that I should soon have had her at what you call a *non-plus*; but no, no; no such thing; she can give you a sharp turn in a moment.

Love. Ay!

Sir Bash. Give her her due, I am nothing to her. I thought I had her fast, but she went round me quick as lightning; and, would you believe it? [*Looks highly pleased.*] she did not leave me a word to say.

Love. Well! that was hard upon you.

Sir Bash. No, not hard at all. Those little victories I don't mind. You know I told you I had something for your private ear. Have you observed nothing odd and singular in me?

Love. Not in the least. In the whole circle of my acquaintance I know nobody so little tinged with oddity.

Sir Bash. What, have you seen nothing?—— [*Laughs.*] Have you remarked nothing particular in regard to my wife?

Love. Why, you don't live happy with her: but that is not a singular case.

Sir Bash. But I tell you—this must be in confidence—I am, at the bottom, a very odd fellow.

Love. You do yourself injustice, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. No, not in the least. It is too true—I am in the main a very odd fellow: I am indeed as odd a fish as lives; and you must have seen it before now.

Love. I see it! I am not apt to spy defects in my friends. What can this be? You are not jealous, I hope?

Sir Bash. You have not hit the right nail on the head. No, not jealous. Do her justice, I am safe as to that point. My lady has high notions of honour. No, it is not that.

Love. Not a ray of light to guide me: explain, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. [*Smiling at him.*] You could never have imagined it. But first let me shut this door.

Love. What whim has got possession of him now? [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. Mr Lovemore, I have great dependence upon you. I am going to make a discovery—I blush at the very thought of it. [*Turns away.*

Love. Be a man, Sir Bashful; out with it at once; let me advise you.

Sir Bash. The very thing I want. The affair is—but then if he should betray me!—Mr Lovemore, I doubt you, and yet esteem you. Some men there are, who, when a confidence is reposed in them, take occasion from thence to hold a hank over their friend, and tyrannize him all the rest of his days.

Love. O fy! this is ungenerous. True friend-

ship is of another quality: it feels from sympathy; honour is the active principle; and the strictest secrecy is an inviolable rule.

Sir Bash. Mr Lovemore, I have no further doubt—Stay; did not you hear a noise? Don't I see a shadow moving under the bottom of that door? [*Goes to the door.*]

Love. What has got into his head?

Sir Bash. [*Looking out.*] Servants have a way of listening.

Love. Rank jealousy! he has it through the very brain!

Sir Bash. No, no, all's safe. Mr Lovemore, I will make you the depositary, the faithful depositary of a secret: let it pass from the bottom of my heart to the inmost recess of yours: there let it rest concealed from every prying eye.—— My inclination—There—I see a laugh already forming in every feature of your face.

Love. Then my face is no true index of the mind. Were you to know the agitations in which you keep me by this suspense—

Sir Bash. I believe it. To make an end at once, my inclinations are totally changed—no, not changed, but they are not what they seemed to be. Love is the passion that possesses me—I am in love, and—[*Turns from him.*] and I am ashamed of myself.

Love. Ashamed! love is a noble passion: but don't let me hear any more about it. Lady Constant will discover all, and then the blame will fall on me. If your heart revolts from her, don't let me be thought in league with you. You need not involve me in a quarrel with her ladyship.

Sir Bash. You don't take me right. You are wide, quite wide of the mark. Hear me out.

Love. No, no more. You must excuse me.

Sir Bash. You shall hear me. The object of my passion, this charming woman, whom I dote on to distraction——

Love. Your pardon; I won't hear it—[*Walks away from him.*] When her ladyship hears of his gallantry, the devil is in the dice, if the spirit of revenge does not mould her to my purposes.

Sir Bash. [*Following* LOVEMORE.] I say, Mr Lovemore, this adorable creature——

Love. Keep your secret, Sir Bashful. [*Avoiding him.*]

Sir Bash. [*Following him.*] Who looks so lovely in my eyes——

Love. Well; I don't desire to know her.

Sir Bash. You do know her. [*Following him.*] This idol of my heart is——my own wife!

Love. [*Stares at him.*] Your own wife?

Sir Bash. Yes, my own wife. [*Looks silly, and turns away.*] 'Tis all over with me: I am undone.

Love. This is the most unexpected discovery.

Sir Bash. Look ye there now; he laughs at me already.

Love. [*Aside.*] His wife must not know this. The grass is cut under my feet if she ever hears a word of it.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] He is struck with amazement, and does not say a word to me.

Love. [*Aside.*] I must not encourage him.—— And can this be possible, Sir Bashful?—In love with your own wife?

Sir Bash. Spare my confusion. I have made myself very ridiculous. [*Looks at him, and turns away.*] I know I have.

Love. Ridiculous! Far from it. Can it be wrong to love a valuable woman? Not to feel the impressions of beauty and of merit were downright insensibility; but then we should always admire with discretion. The folly of us married men consists in letting our wives perceive the vehemence with which we love; and the consequence is, we are enslaved for the rest of our lives.—I could trust you with a secret, which, perhaps, would keep you in countenance. Could you imagine it? I love my wife.

Sir Bash. How?

Love. I am in love with my wife.

Sir Bash. Oh! no, no;—hey! [*Looking highly pleased.*] you make me laugh. You don't love her, do you?

Love. Passionately, tenderly; with all the ardour of affection.

Sir Bash. Give me your hand. Ha! ha!—I did not expect this. This is some relief. Ha! ha!—you have made me happy. And have you led the life you have done all this time, on purpose to conceal your regard from her?

Love. For that very purpose. I esteem her, I love her; but I would not have her know it.

Sir Bash. No!

Love. Upon no consideration; nor would I have the world know it.

Sir Bash. Perfectly right.

Love. To be sure. Tell your wife that you esteem her good qualities, and admire her person, she cries *victoria*, falls to plundering, and then you must either break her chain, or wear it in the face of the world, a laughing-stock for all your acquaintance.

Sir Bash. That is what I have always been afraid of.

Love. Not without reason. The world delights in ridicule. Do you know, if our secrets were to transpire, that we should have nothing but wit, and raillery, and fleers, and taunts flying about our ears?

Sir Bash. But I have taken good care. I have quarrelled with my lady ten times a day on purpose to cloak the affair, and prevent all suspicion.

Love. Admirable! I commend your prudence. Besides,—my Lady Constant, you know, has some youthful vigour about her; a graceful person, and an eye that inflames desire; and desire at your time of life, you know——

Sir Bash. Po! it is not for that; that is nothing. I wear admirably well, Mr Lovemore.

Love. Do you?

Sir Bash. As young as ever: but I don't let her know it.

Love. Well! if you are discreet in that point, you are a very Machiavel!

Sir Bash. Yes, yes; I fight cunning.

[*Laughs.*

Love. Let nothing betray you. Be upon your guard: that is my own plan exactly. You want no advice from me.

Sir Bash. Pardon me: you can assist me.—My dear brother sufferer, give me your hand. We can, in a sly way, be of great use to each other.

Love. As how?

Sir Bash. I'll tell you. There are some things which you know our wives expect to be done.

Love. So there are.——[*Aside.*] What the devil is he at now?

Sir Bash. Now, if you will assist me——

Love. You may depend upon my assistance.

Sir Bash. Thus it is: my wife, you know, keeps a power of company, and makes a great figure there. I could shew her in any company in England: I wish she could say the same of me.

Love. Why truly I wish she could.

Sir Bash. But that's out of the question. Now, if you will come into my scheme—It must be a deep secret—How? Is that Sir Brilliant's voice?

Enter Sir BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. Sir Bashful, you see what attraction you have. Lovemore, I did not expect to see you here.

Love. Nor did I expect you, Sir Brilliant.

[*Aside.*

Sir Bash. Confusion!—This unseasonable visit— [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. And your lady, is she at home, Sir Bashful?

Sir Bash. Her own people keep that account, sir: I know nothing of her.

Sir Bril. Nay, never talk slightingly of a lady who possesses so many elegant accomplishments. She has spirit, sense, wit, and beauty.

Sir Bash. Spirit, sense, wit, and beauty! she has them all sure enough.—Sir, I am no sworn appraiser, to take an inventory of her effects.—[*Aside.*] Hey, Lovemore!

[*Looks at him and laughs.*

Love [*To Sir* BASHFUL.] Vastly well.

Sir Bril. Is her ladyship visible this morning?

Sir Bash. Whether she is visible, or not, is no business of mine, but I know she is unintelligible this morning, and incomprehensible this morning. She has the vapours; but your conversation, I suppose, will brighten her up for the rest of the day.

Sir Bril. Why, as it happens, I have the rarest piece of news to communicate to her. Lovemore, you know Sir Amorous la Fool?

Love. He that was sheriff the other day? Came up with an address, and got himself knighted?

Sir Bril. The same. He declared he would live with his friends upon the same familiar footing as before, and his new dignities should make no alteration.

Sir Bash. I have seen the knight. What of him?

Sir Bril. Poor devil, he is in such a scrape!—

Sir Bash. What's the matter? Bubbled at play I suppose.

Sir Bril. Worse, much worse.

Love. He has been black-balled at one of the clubs?

Sir Bash. Or run through the body in a duel?

Sir Bril. Why that's a scrape indeed: but it is not that.

Sir Bash. What then?

Sir Bril. So unfortunate a discovery; he is fallen in love—I cannot help laughing at him.

Love. Po! fallen in love with some coquette, who plays off her airs, and makes a jest of him.

Sir Bash. A young actress may be, or an opera singer?

Sir Bril. No, you will never guess. Sir Bashful,—like a silly devil, he is fallen in love with his own wife.

Sir Bash. Fallen in love with his own wife!

[*Stares at him.*

Sir Bril. Yes; he has made up all quarrels; his jealousy is at an end, and he is to be upon his good behaviour for the rest of his life.—Could you expect this, Lovemore?

Love. No, sir; neither I, nor my friend, Sir Bashful, expected this.

Sir Bash. It is a stroke of surprise to me.

[*Looking uneasy.*

Sir Bril. I heard it at my Lady Betty Scandal's, and we had such a laugh: the whole company were in astonishment: whist stood still, quadrille laid down the cards, and brag was in suspense. Poor Sir Amorous! it is very ridiculous, is not it, Sir Bashful?

Sir Bash. Very ridiculous indeed.—[*Aside.*] My own case exactly, and my friend Lovemore's too.

Sir Bril. The man is lost, undone, ruined, dead and buried.

Love. [*Laughing.*] He will never be able to shew his face after this discovery.

Sir Bril. Oh, never; 'tis all over with him. Sir Bashful, this does not divert you; you don't enjoy it.

Sir Bash. Who I?—I—I—nothing can be more pleasant, and—I—laugh as heartily as I possibly can. [*Forcing a laugh.*

Sir Bril. Lovemore, you remember Sir Amorous used to strut, and talk big, and truly he did not care a pinch of snuff for his wife, not he; pretended to be as much at ease as Sir Bashful about his lady, and as much his own master as you yourself, or any man of pleasure about town.

Love. I remember him: but as to Sir Bashful and myself, we know the world: we understand life.

Sir Bash. So we do; the world will never have such a story of us. Will they, Lovemore?

Love. Oh! we are free: we are out of the scrape.

Sir Bril. Sir Amorous la Fool will be a proverb. Adieu for him the side-box whisper, the soft assignation, and all the joys of freedom. He

is retired with his Penelope to love one another in the country; and next winter they will come to town to hate one another.

Sir Bash. Do you think it will end so?

Sir Bril. No doubt of it. That is always the denouement of modern matrimony. But I have not told you the worst of his case. Our friend, Sir Charles Wildfire, you know, was writing a comedy, and what do you think he has done? He has drawn the character of Sir Amorous, and made him the hero of the play.

Sir Bash. What, put him into a comedy?

Sir Bril. Even so: it is called 'The Amorous Husband; or, The Man in Love with his own Wife.' Oh! oh! oh! oh!

Love. We must send in time for places.

[*Laughs with Sir* BRILLIANT.

Sir Bash. Lovemore carries it with an air.

[*Aside.*

Sir Bril. Yes, we must secure places. Sir Bashful, you shall be of the party.

Sir Bash. The party will be very agreeable. I shall enjoy the joke prodigiously. Ha! ha!

[*Forces a laugh.*

Love. Yes, Sir Bashful, we shall relish the humour. [*Looks at him and laughs.*

Sir Bril. The play will have a run: the people of fashion will crowd after such a character.—I must drive to a million of places, and put it about; but first, with your leave, Sir Bashful, I will take the liberty to give a hint of the affair to your lady. It will appear so ridiculous to her.

Sir Bash. Do you think it will?

Sir Bril. Without doubt: she has never met with any thing like it: has she, Lovemore?

Love. I fancy not: Sir Bashful, you take care of that.

Sir Bash. Yes, yes; I shall never be the town-talk.—Hey. Lovemore!

Sir Bril. Well, I'll step and pay my respects to my Lady Constant. Poor Sir Amorous! he will have his horns added to his coat of arms in a little time. Ha! ha! [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. There, you see how it is. I shall get lampooned, be-rhymed, and niched into a comedy.

Love. Po! never be frightened at this. Nobody knows of your weakness but myself, and I cann't betray your secret for my own sake.

Sir Bash. Very true.

Love. This discovery shews the necessity of concealing our loves. We must act with caution. Give my lady no reason to suspect that you have the least regard for her.

Sir Bash. Not for the world.

Love. Keep to that.

Sir Bash. I have done her a thousand kindnesses, but all by stealth; all in a sly way.

Love. Have you?

Sir Bash. Oh! a multitude. I'll tell you. She has been plaguing me a long time for an addition to her jewels. She wants a diamond cross, and a better pair of diamond buckles. Madam, says I, I will have no such trumpery; but then goes I and bespeaks them of the first jeweller in town.—All under the rose. The buckles are finished: worth five hundred! She will have them this very day, without knowing from what quarter they come—I cann't but laugh at the contrivance—the man that brings them will run away directly, without saying a word. [*Laughs heartily.*

Love. Sly, sly.—You know what you are about.

Sir Bash. Ay, let me alone——[*Laughs with* LOVEMORE.] And then, to cover the design still more, when I see her wear her baubles, I can take occasion to be as jealous as bedlam.

Love. So you can: ha! ha!—[*Aside.*] I wish he may never be jealous of me in good earnest.

Sir Bash. Give me your hand. [*Looks at him, and laughs.*] I am safe, I think.

Love. [*Laughing with him*] Perfectly safe—[*Aside.*] if it was not for his own folly.

Sir Bash. But I was telling you, Mr Lovemore,—we can be of essential use to each other.

Love. As how, pray?

Sir Bash. Why, my lady is often in want of money. It would be ridiculous in me to supply her. Now if you will take the money from me, and pretend to lend it to her, out of friendship, you know——

Love. Nothing can be better—[*Aside.*] Here is a fellow pimping for his own horns.—I shall be glad to serve you.

Sir Bash. I am for ever obliged to you—here, here; take it now—here it is in bank notes—one, two, three; there is three hundred—give her that, and tell her you have more at her service to-morrow or next day, if her occasions require it.

Love. My good friend, to oblige you. [*Takes the money.*] This is the rarest adventure!

Sir Bash. I'll do any thing for you in return.

Love. I shall have occasion for your friendship—that is to forgive me if you find me out. [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. Lose no time; step to her now—hold, hold; Sir Brilliant is with her.

Love. I can dismiss him. Rely upon my friendship: I will make her ladyship easy for you.

Sir Bash. It will be kind of you.

Love. It shall be her own fault if I don't.

Sir Bash. A thousand thanks to you—well, is not this the rarest project?

Love. It is the newest way——of satisfying a man's wife!

Sir Bash. Ay! let this head of mine alone.

Love. [*Aside.*] Not if I can help it. Hush!—I hear Sir Brilliant; he is coming down stairs. I'll take this opportunity, and step to her ladyship now.

Sir Bash. Do so, do so.

Love. I am gone. [*Aside.*] Who can blame me now if I cuckold this fellow? [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. Prosper you, prosper you, Mr Lovemore. Make me thankful: he is a true friend. I don't know what I should do without him.

Enter Sir BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. Sir Bashful, how have you managed this?

Sir Bash. I have no art, no management. What's the matter?

Sir Bril. I don't know what you have done, but

your lady laughs till she is ready to expire at what I have been telling her.

Sir Bash. And she thinks Sir Amorous la Fool an object of rid

Sir Bril. She does not give credit to a single syllable of the story. A man that loves his wife would be a phœnix indeed! Such a thing might exist formerly, but in this polished age is no where to be found. That's her opinion of the matter.

Sir Bash. [*Laughs.*] A whimsical notion of hers! and so she thinks you may go about with a lanthorn to find a man that sets any value upon his wife?

Sir Bril. You have managed to convince her of it. How the devil do you contrive to govern so fine a woman? I know several, without her pretensions, who have long ago thrown off all restraint. You keep up your dignity.

Sir Bash. Yes, I know what I am about.

Sir Bril. You!—you are quite in the fashion. —Apropos; I fancy I shall want you to afford me your assistance. You know my Lady Charlotte Modelove? She has a taste for the theatre: at Bell-Grove Place she has an elegant stage, where her select friends amuse themselves now and then with a representation of certain comic pieces. We shall there act the new comedy, but we apprehend some difficulty in the arrangement of the several characters. Now you shall act Sir Amorous, and——

Sir Bash. I act, sir!—I know nothing of the character.

Sir Bril. Po! say nothing of that. In time you may reach the ridiculous absurdity of it, and play it as well as another.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] Confusion! he does not suspect, I hope—divert yourselves, sir, as you may, but not at my expence I promise you.

Sir Bril. Never be so abrupt. Who knows but Lady Constant may be the happy wife, the *cara sposa* of the piece! and then, you in love with her, and she laughing at you for it, will give a zest to the humour, which every body will relish in the most exquisite degree.

Sir Bash. Po! this is too much. You are very pleasant, but you won't easily get me to play the fool.

Sir Bril. Well, consider of it. I shall be delighted to see my friend Sir Bashful tied to his wife's apron-string, and, with a languishing look, melting away in admiration of her charms. Oh, oh, oh, oh!—adieu; *a l'honneur;* good morning, Sir Bashful. [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. I don't know what to make of all this. But there is no danger. As long as nobody knows it, I may venture to love my wife. There will be no harm, while the secret is kept close as night, concealed in tenfold darkness, from the wits and scoffers of the age.

Enter LOVEMORE.

Sir Bash Well, well;—how? what have you done?

Love. As I could wish: she is infinitely obliged to me, and will never forget the civility.

Sir Bash. A thousand thanks to you. I am not suspected?

Love. She has not a distant idea of you in this business. She was rather delicate at first, and hesitated, and thought it an indecorum to accept of money even from a friend. But that objection soon vanished. I told her, it is but too visible that she is unfortunately yoked with a husband, whose humour will never be softened down to the least compliance with her inclinations.

Sir Bash. That was well said, and had a good effect, I hope.

Love. I hope so too.

Sir Bash. It helps to carry on the plot, you know.

Love. Admirably; it puts things in the train I wish.

Sir Bash And so, to cover the design, you gave me the worst of characters?

Love. I painted you in terrible colours.

Sir Bash. Do so always, and she will never suspect me of being privy to any civility you may shew her.

Love. I would not have you know any thing of my civility to her for the world. [*Aside.*] I have succeeded thus far. I talked a few musty sentences, such as, the person who receives a civility confers the obligation, with more jargon to that purpose, and so with some reluctance she complied at last, and things are now upon the footing I would have them.—Death and fury! there comes my wife!

Sir Bash. Ay, and here comes my wife.

Love. What the devil brings her hither?

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] Now, now; now let me see how he will carry it before Mrs Lovemore.—Walk in, madam! walk in, Mrs Lovemore.

Enter Mrs LOVEMORE, *and Lady* CONSTANT, *at opposite doors.*

Lady Cons. Mrs Lovemore, to see you abroad is a novelty indeed.

Mrs Love. As great perhaps, as that of finding your ladyship at home. Mr Lovemore, I did not expect to have the pleasure of meeting you.

Love. Then we are both agreeably surprised.

Sir Bash. Now mind how he behaves. [*Aside.*

Mrs Love. I thought you were gone to your city-banker.

Love. And you find that you are mistaken. I have deferred it till the evening—[*Aside.*] 'Sdeath! to be teased in this manner.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] No, no; he won't drop the mask. [*Looks at Lady* CONSTANT.] She has touched the cash; I can see the bank-notes sparkling in her eyes.

Mrs Love. If you don't go into the city till the evening, may I hope for your company at dinner, Mr Lovemore?

Love. The question is entertaining, but as it was settled this morning, I think it has lost the graces of novelty.

Sir Bash. He won't let her have the least suspicion of his regard. [*Aside.*

Lady Cons. I dare say Mr Lovemore will dine

at home, if it conduces to your happiness, ma'am; and Sir Bashful, I take it, will dine at home for the contrary reason.

Sir Bash. Madam, I will dine at home, or I will dine abroad, for what reason I please, and it is my pleasure to give no reason for either.—Lovemore! [*Looks at him, and smiles.*

Love. [*Aside to Sir* BASHFUL.] Bravo!—What a blockhead it is!

Mrs Love. As you have your chariot at the door, Mr Lovemore, if you have no objection, I will send away my chair, and you may do me the honour of a place in your carriage.

Love. The honour will be very great to me, but—so many places to call at. If I had known this sooner——You had better keep your chair.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] Cunning! cunning! he would not be seen in his chariot with her for the world. He has more discretion than I have.

Lady Cons. Mrs Lovemore, since you have, at last, ventured to come abroad, I hope you will think it a change for the better. You are too domestic. I shall expect now to see you often: and, apropos, I am to have a route to-morrow evening; if you will do me the honour of your company——

Sir Bash. A route to-morrow evening! you have a route every evening, I think. Learn of Mrs Lovemore; imitate her example, and don't let me have your hurricane months all the year round in my house.—Hip! [*Aside.*] Lovemore, how do you like me?

Love. [*Aside to Sir* BASHFUL.] You improve upon it every time. But I am loitering here as if I had nothing to do.—My Lady Constant, I have the honour to wish your ladyship a good morning. Sir Bashful, yours—madam.

[*Bows gravely to Mrs* LOVEMORE, *hums a tune, and exit.*

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] He knows how to play the game. I'll try what I can do. Mrs Lovemore, I have the honour to wish you a good morning. Madam—

[*Bows gravely to Lady* CONSTANT, *hums a tune, and exit.*

Mrs Love. Two such husbands!

Lady Cons. As to my swain, I grant you: Mr Lovemore is, at least, well-bred; he has an understanding, and may, in time, reflect. Sir Bashful never qualifies himself with the smallest tincture of civility.

Mrs Love. If civility can qualify the draught, I must allow Mr Lovemore to have a skilful hand. But there is no end to his projects. Every day opens a new scene. Another of his intrigues is come to light. I came to consult with your ladyship. I know you are acquainted with the Widow Bellmour.

Lady Cons. The Widow Bellmour! I know her perfectly well.

Mrs Love. Not so well, perhaps, as you may imagine. She has thrown out the lure for my wild gallant, and, in order to deceive me——

Lady Cons. My dear, you must be mistaken. Who tells you this?

Mrs Love. Oh! I can trust to my intelligence. Sir Brilliant Fashion, by way of blind to me, has been this morning drawing so amiable a picture of the lady—

Lady Cons. Sir Brilliant's authority is not always the best, but in this point you may trust to him.

Mrs Love. But when you have heard all the circumstances—

Lady Cons. Depend upon it, you are wrong, I know the Widow Bellmour. Her turn of character, and way of thinking——

Mrs Love. Excuse me, madam. You decide without hearing me.

Lady Cons. All scandal, take my word for it. However, let me hear your story. We'll adjourn to my dressing-room, if you will; and I promise to confute all you can say. I would have you know the Widow Bellmour: you will be in love with her. My dear madam, have not you a tinge of jealousy?—Beware of that malady. If you see things through that medium, I shall give you up.

That jaundice of the mind, whose colours strike
On friend and foe, and paint them all alike.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment at the Widow* BELLMOUR'S: *several Chairs, a Toilette, a Bookcase, and a Harpsichord, disposed up and down.*

MIGNIONET. [*Putting things in order.*]

Mig. I don't well know what to make of this same Lord Etheridge. He is coming here again to-day, I suppose: all this neatness, and all this care must be for him. Well, it does not signify: [*Arranging the chairs.*] there is a pleasure in obeying Madam Bellmour. She is a sweet lady, that's the truth of it. 'Twere a pity if any of these men, with their deceitful arts, should draw her into a snare. But she knows them all. They must rise early who can outwit her. [*Settling the Toilette.*]

Enter Mrs BELLMOUR, *reading.*

Oh! blest with temper, whose unclouded ray
Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day;
She who can own a sister's charms, and hear
Sighs for a daughter with unwounded ear;
That never answers till a husband cools,
And if she rules him, never shews she rules.
Sensible, elegant Pope!
Charms by accepting, by submitting sways,
Yet has her humour most, when she obeys.

[*Seems to read on.*

Mign. Lord love my mistress! always so charming, so gay, and so happy!

Mrs Bell. These exquisite characters of women! they are a sort of painter's gallery, where one sees the portraits of all one's acquaintance, and sometimes we see our own features too. Mignionet, put this book in its place.

Mign. Yes, ma'am; and there's your toilette looks as elegant as hands can make it.

Mrs Bell. Does it? I think it does. You have some taste. Apropos, where is my new song?—Oh! here it is: I must make myself mistress of it. [*Plays upon the harpsichord, and sings a little.*] I believe I have conquered it. [*Rises, and goes to her toilette.*] This hair is always tormenting me, always in disorder: this lock must be for ever gadding out of its place. I must and will subdue it. Do you know, Mignionet, that this is a pretty song? It was writ by my Lord Etheridge. My lord has a turn. [*Sings a little.*] I must be perfect before he comes. [*Hums the tune.*] Do you know that I think my lord is one of those men who may be endured?

Mign. Yes, ma'am, I know you think so.

Mrs Bell. Do you?

Mign. And if I have any skill, ma'am, you are not without a little partiality for his lordship.

Mrs Bell. Really? Then you think I like him, perhaps? Do you think I like him? I don't well know how that is. Like him! no, not absolutely: it is not decided: and yet I don't know, if I had a mind to humour myself, and to give way a little to inclination, there is something here in my heart that would be busy, I believe. The man has a softness of manner, a turn of wit, and does not want sentiment. Can I call it sentiment? Yes, I think I may. He has sentiment; and then he knows the manners, the usage of the world, and he points out the ridicule of things with so much humour!

Mign. You'll be caught, ma'am, I see that. To be sure, my lord has a quality-air, and can make himself agreeable. But what of that? You know but very little of him. Is a man's character known in three or four weeks time? [*Mrs* BELLMOUR *hums a tune.*] Do, my dear madam, mind what I say: I am at times very considerate. I make my remarks, and I see very plainly—Lord, ma'am, what am I doing? I am talking to you for your own good, and you are all in the air, and no more mind me, no, no more than if I was nothing at all.

Mrs Bell. [*Continues humming a tune.*] You talk wonderfully well upon the subject; but, as I know how the cards lie, and can play the best of the game, and as I have a song to amuse me, one is inclined to give musical nonsense the preference.

Mign. I assure you, ma'am, I am not one of those servants, that bargain for their mistress's inclinations: but you are going to take a leap in the dark. What does my Lord Etheridge mean, with his chair always brought into the hall, and the curtains close about his ears? Why does not he come like himself, and not care who sees him? There's some mystery at the bottom, I'll be sworn there is; and so you'll find at last.—Dear heart, ma'am, if you are determined not to listen, what signifies my living with you? At this rate, I am of no service to you.

Mrs Bell. There;—I have conquered my song. [*Runs to her glass.*] How do I look to-day? The eyes do well enough, I think. And so, Mignionet, you imagine I shall play the fool, and marry my Lord Etheridge?

Mign. You have it through the very heart of you: I see that.

Mrs Bell. Do you?—I don't know what to say to it. Poor Sir Brilliant Fashion! if I prefer his rival, what will become of him?—I won't think about it.

Enter POMPEY.

Mrs Bell. What's the matter, Pompey?

Pom. A lady in a chair desires to know if your ladyship is at home?

Mrs Bell. Has the lady no name?

Pom. Yes; I fancies she has, ma'am; but she did not tell it.

Mrs Bell. How awkward!—well, shew the lady up stairs.

Mign. Had not you better receive her in the drawing-room, ma'am? I have not half done my business here.

Mrs Bell. Oh! you have done very well. There will be less formality here. I dare say it is some intimate acquaintance, though that foolish boy does not recollect her name. Here she comes. I don't know her name.

Enter Mrs LOVEMORE.

Mrs Love. [*Disconcerted.*] I beg pardon for this intrusion.

Mrs Bell. Pray walk in, ma'am. Mignionet, reach a chair. [*Mrs* LOVEMORE *crosses the stage, and they salute each other with an air of distant civility.*]

Mrs Love. I am afraid this visit from one who has not the honour of knowing you——

Mrs Bell. Oh, make no apology, ma'am.—Mignionet, you may withdraw. [*Exit* MIGNIONET.

Mrs Love. It may appear extraordinary that a stranger thus intrudes upon you;—but a particular circumstance determined me to take this liberty. I hope you will excuse the freedom.

Mrs Bell. You do me honour, ma'am: pray no excuses. A particular circumstance, you say?

Mrs Love. I shall appear, perhaps, very ridiculous, and, indeed, I am afraid I have done the most absurd thing! but a lady of your acquaintance—you know my Lady Constant, ma'am?

Mrs Bell. Extremely well.

Mrs Love. She has given you such an amiable character for benevolence and a certain elegant way of thinking, entirely your own, that I flatter myself, if it is in your power, you will be generous enough to afford me your assistance.

Mrs Bell. Lady Constant is very obliging. Make a trial of me, ma'am, and if I can be of any use——

Mrs Love. I fear I shall ask you a strange question:—Are you acquainted with a gentleman of the name of Lovemore?

Mrs Bell. Lovemore? No such name on my list.—Lovemore? No:—I recollect no such person. The circle of my acquaintance is small: I am almost a stranger in town.

Mrs Love. That makes an end, ma'am. I beg your pardon. I have given you an unnecessary trouble. [*Going.*

Mrs Bell. [*Aside.*] Mighty odd this! her manner is interesting.—You have given me no trouble, but my curiosity is excited. [*Takes her by the hand.*] I beg you will keep your chair. Pray be seated.—What can this mean? [*Aside.*] Will you be so good as to inform me who the gentleman is?

Mrs Love. The story will be uninteresting to you, and to me it is painful. My grievances—— [*Puts her handkerchief to her eyes.*]

Mrs Bell. [*Aside.*] Her grief affects me. [*Looks at her till she has recovered herself.*] I would not importune too much——

Mrs Love. You have such an air of frankness and generosity, that I will open myself without reserve: I have the tenderest regard for Mr Lovemore: I have been married to him these two years. I admired his understanding, his sensibility, and his spirit. My heart was his; I loved him with unbounded passion. I thought the flame was mutual, and you may believe I was happy. But of late, there is such a revolution in his temper! I know not what to make of it. I am doomed to be unhappy.

Mrs Bell. Perhaps not: you may still have much in your power.

Mrs Love. My power is at an end. Instead of the looks of affection, and the expressions of tenderness, with which he used to meet me, it is nothing now but cold, averted, superficial civility; while abroad he runs on in a wild career of pleasure, and, to my deep affliction, has attached himself entirely to another object.

Mrs Bell. And if I had known Mr Lovemore, do you imagine that my advice or persuasion would avail you any thing?

Mrs Love. I had such a fancy. [*Aside.*] What can I think of her?

Mrs Bell. You are much mistaken. In these cases friends may interpose, but what can they do? They recommend a wife to the good will, the honour, and generosity of her husband; but when a woman, who should be esteemed and loved, is recommended as an object of compassion, she is humbled indeed: it is all over with her. A wife should recommend herself by the graces of her person, and the variety of her talents. Men will prove false, and if there is nothing in your complaint but mere gallantry on his side, I protest I do not see that your case is so very bad.

Mrs Love. Can it be worse, ma'am?

Mrs Bell. A great deal.—If his affections, instead of being alienated, had been extinguished, what would be the consequence?—A downright, sullen, habitual insensibility. From that lethargy of affection a man is not easily recalled. In all Love's bill of mortality, there is not a more fatal disorder. But this is not the case with Mr Lovemore: by your account, he still has sentiment; and where there is sentiment, there is room to hope for an alteration.—But where the heart has lost its feeling, you have the pain of finding yourself neglected; and for what? The man has grown stupid, and to the warm beams of wit and beauty, as impenetrable as an ice-house.

Mrs Love. That is not my complaint. I have to do with one, who is too susceptible of impressions from every beautiful object that comes in his way.

Mrs Bell. Why, so much the better A new idea strikes his fancy. He is inconstant, but, after wavering and fluttering, he may settle at last.

Mrs Love. How light she makes of it! she apologizes for him! [*Aside.*

Mrs Bell. And, perhaps, the fault is on the woman's side—

Mrs Love. The virtue of my conduct, madam—

Mrs Bell. Oh! I would have laid my life you would be at that work. But virtue is not the question at present. I suppose virtue; that is always understood. The fault I mean, is the want of due attention to the art of pleasing. It is there that most women fail. In these times, virtue may be its own reward. Virtue alone cannot please the taste of the age. It is *la belle nature*, virtue embellished by the advantages of art, that men expect now-a-days. That is the whole affair; I would not make myself uneasy, ma'am.

Mrs Love. Not uneasy, when his indifference does not diminish my regard for him! Not uneasy, when the man I dote upon no longer fixes his happiness at home!

Mrs Bell. Give me leave to speak my mind freely. I have observed, when the fiend jealousy is roused, that women lay out a wonderful deal of anxiety and vexation to no account; when, perhaps, if the truth were known, they should be angry with themselves instead of their husbands.

Mrs Love. Angry with myself, madam! Calumny can lay nothing to my charge.

Mrs Bell. There again now! that is the folly of us all.

Mrs Love. And after being married so long, and behaving all the time with such an equality!

Mrs Bell. Ay, that equality is the rock so many split upon. The men will change. Excuse my freedom. They are so immersed in luxury, that they must have eternal variety in their happiness.

Mrs Love. She justifies him! [*Aside.*

Mrs Bell. Your case may not be desperate: I would venture to lay a pot of coffee, that the person who now rivals you in your husband's affections, does it without your good qualities, and even without your beauty, by the mere force of agreeable talents, and some skill in the art of pleasing.

Mrs Love. I am afraid that compliment——

Mrs Bell. If I judge right, you are entitled to it. Let me ask you: Do you know this formidable rival?

Mrs Love. There, I own, I am puzzled.

Mrs Bell. What sort of woman is she?

Mrs Love. Formidable indeed! She has been

described to me as one of charming and rare accomplishments.

Mrs Bell. Never throw up the cards for all that. Take my advice, ma'am.—You seem to have qualities that may dispute your husband's heart with any body; but the exertion of those amiable qualities, I fear, may be suppressed. Excuse my frankness. You should counteract your rival by the very arts which she employs against you. I know a lady now in your very situation: and what does she do? She consumes herself with unceasing jealousy; whereas, if she would exert but half the pains she uses in teasing herself, to vie with the person who has won her husband from her; to vie with her, I say, in the art of pleasing—for there it is a woman's pride should be piqued—Would she do that, take my word for it, victory would declare in her favour. You are not without attractions; give them their energy, and you conquer.

Mrs Love. Do you think so, ma'am?

Mrs Bell. Think so! I am sure of it. You must exert yourself. It is the wife's business to bait the hook for her husband with variety. Virtue alone, by her own native charms, would do if the men were perfect. But it is otherwise; and, since vice can assume allurements, why should not truth and innocence have additional ornaments also?

Mrs Love. I find Sir Brilliant told me truth. [*Aside.*

Mrs Bell. Give me leave, ma'am: I have been married, and am a little in the secret. To win a heart is easy; to keep it is the difficulty. After the fatal words 'for better, for worse,' women relax into indolence, and while they are guilty of no infidelity, they think every thing safe. But they are mistaken: a great deal is wanting; an address, a vivacity, a desire to please; the agreeable contrast; the sense that pleases, the folly that charms—A favourite poet, Prior, has expressed it with delicacy.

> Above the fixed and settled rules
> Of vice and virtue in the schools,
> The better part should set before 'em
> A grace, a manner, a decorum.

Mrs Love. But when the natural temper——

Mrs Bell. Oh! the natural temper must be forced. Home must be made a place of pleasure to the husband. How is that to be done? That equality, which you talk of, is a sameness that palls and wearies. A wife should throw infinite variety into her manner. She should, as it were, multiply herself, and be, as it were, sundry different women on different occasions. The tender, the affectionate, the witty, the silent, all in their turns, all shifting the scene, and she succeeding to herself as quick as lightning. And this I take to be the whole mystery; the way to keep a man.—But I beg your pardon. I go on too fast: you will think me the giddiest creature—

Mrs Love. Quite the reverse, ma'am; you are very obliging!——

Mrs Bell. I have tired myself and you too.—But pray, may I now inquire, who was so kind as to intimate that I am acquainted with Mr Lovemore?

Mrs Love. It was a mere mistake. I have given you a great deal of trouble. You will excuse my frankness: I had heard that his visits were frequent here.

Mrs Bell. His visits frequent here! My Lady Constant could not tell you so?

Mrs Love. She told me quite the contrary. She knows your amiable qualities, and does you justice.

Mrs Bell. The accident is lucky! it has procured me the honour of your acquaintance. And I suppose you imagined that I had robbed you of Mr Lovemore's heart?—Scandal will be buzzing about. I can laugh at every thing of that sort. [*A rap at the door.*] Oh! Heavens! some troublesome visit.—— [*Rings a bell.*

Enter MIGNIONET.

Mrs Bell. I am not at home. Go, and give an answer.

Mign. It is Lord Etheridge, ma'am: he is coming up stairs. The servants did not know you had changed your mind.

Mrs Bell. Was ever any thing so cross? Tell his lordship I have company; I am busy; I am not well; any thing, don't let him come in. Make haste, dispatch; I won't see him

Mrs Love. I beg I may not hinder you: I shall take my leave.

Mrs Bell. By no means. Our conversation grows interesting. I positively will not see my lord.

Mrs Love. I cann't agree to that. You must see his lordship. I can step into another room.

Mrs Bell. Will you be so good?—You will find something to amuse you in that cabinet. [*Points to a door in the back scene.*] We must talk farther. My lord sha'n't stay long.

Mrs Love. Nay, but if you stand upon ceremony—

Mrs Bell. Very well: I'll contrive it. This is a lover of mine. A lover and a husband are the same thing. Perhaps it will divert you to hear how I manage him. I hear him on the stairs. Make haste: Mignionet, show the way.

[*Mrs* LOVE. *and* MIGNIONET *go out at the back scene.*

Mrs Bell. Let me see how I look to receive him. [*Runs to her glass.*

Enter LOVEMORE, *with a Star and Garter, as Lord* ETHERIDGE.

Love. A heavenly image in the glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears,
Repairs her smiles———

Mrs Bell. Repairs her smiles, my lord! You are satirical this morning. Pray, my lord, are my features out of repair, like an old house in the country, that wants a tenant?

Love. Nay, now you wrest my words from their visible intention. You cann't suppose that I impute

to such perfect beauty the least want of repair, whatever may be the case, ma'am, with regard to the want of a tenant.

Mrs Bell. Oh! then your opinion is, that I want a tenant. And perhaps you think I am going to put up a bill to signify to all passers-by, that here is a mansion to be let, enquire of the Widow Bellmour. I like your notion; I don't think it would be a bad scheme. Shall I try it?

Love. A palace needs no such invitation. Its natural beauty attracts admiring eyes. But who can bid up to the price? The person who is able to do it——

Mrs Bell. Will be happy; I know that is what you are going to say. But he must do homage for it: and then I will let it to none but a single gentleman. Do you know any body whom these conditions will suit?

Love. Those conditions, ma'am!—[*Aside.*] What the devil does she mean? I am not detected, I hope.——To be sure, ma'am, those conditions—And—none but single gentlemen will presume to—

Mrs Bell. And then it must be a lease for life. But that will never do; nobody will be troubled with it. I shall never get it off my hands: do you think I shall, my lord?

Love. There must be very little taste left, if you have not a number of bidders. You know the ambition of my heart; you know I am devoted to you, upon any terms, even though it were to be bought with life.

Mrs Bell. Heavens! what a dying swain you are! And does your lordship mean to be guilty of matrimony? Lord! what a question have I asked! To be sure, I am the giddiest creature. My lord, don't you think me a strange madcap?

Love. A vein of wit, like yours, that springs at once from vivacity and sentiment, serves to exalt your beauty, and give animation to every charm.

Mrs Bell. Upon my word, you have said it finely! But you are in the right, my lord. Your pensive melancholy beauty is the most insipid thing in nature. And yet we often see features without a mind; and the owner of them sits in the room with you, like a mere vegetable, for an hour together, till, at last, she is incited to the violent exertion of, Yes, sir—I fancy not, ma'am, and then a matter-of-fact conversation! Miss Beverly is going to be married to captain Shoulder-knot—My Lord Mortgage has had another tumble at hazard—Sir Harry Wilding has lost his election—They say short aprons are coming into fashion.

Love. Oh! a matter-of-fact conversation is insupportable.

Mrs Bell. But you meet with nothing else. All in great spirits about nothing, and not an idea among them. Go to Ranelagh, or to what public place you will, it is just the same. A lady comes up to you; How charmingly you look!—But, my dear m'em, did you hear what happened to us the other night? We were going home from the opera—you know my aunt Roly-Poly; it was her coach. There was she and Lady Betty Fidget—What a sweet blonde! How do you do, my dear? [*Curtsying as to another one going by.*] My Lady Betty is quite recovered; we were all frightened about her; but Doctor Snake-root was called in; no, not Doctor Snake-root, Doctor Bolus; and so he altered the course of the medicines, and so my Lady Betty is purely now.—Well, there was she, and my aunt, and Sir George Bragwell—a pretty man Sir George—finest teeth in the world—Your ladyship's most obedient—[*Curtsying.*] We expected you last night, but you did not come.—He! he! he!—and so there was Sir George and the rest of us; and so, turning the corner of Bond-street, tho brute of a coachman—I humbly thank your grace [*Curtsies.*]—the brute of a coachman overturned us, and so my aunt Roly-Poly was frightened out of her wits; and Lady Betty has had her nerves again. Only think! such accidents!—I am glad to see you look so well; *a l'honneur;* he! he! he!

Love. Ho! ho! you paint to the life. I see her moving before me in all her airs.

Mrs Bell. With this conversation their whole stock is exhausted, and away they run to cards. Quadrille has murdered wit!

Love. Ay, and beauty too. Cards are the worst enemies to a complexion: the small-pox is not so bad. The passions throw themselves into every feature: I have seen the countenance of an angel changed, in a moment, to absolute deformity: the little loves and graces that sparkled in the eye, bloomed in the cheek, and smiled about the mouth, all wing their flight, and leave the face, which they before adorned, a prey to grief, to anger, malice, and fury, and the whole train of fretful passions.

Mrs Bell. And the language of the passions is sometimes heard upon those occasions.

Love. Very true, ma'am; and if, by chance, they do bridle and hold in a little, the struggle they undergo is the most ridiculous sight in nature. I have seen a huge oath quivering on the pale lip of a reigning toast for half an hour together, and an uplifted eye accusing the gods for the loss of an odd trick. And then, at last, the whole room in a Babel of sounds. My lord, you flung away the game.—Sir George, why did not you rough the spade?—Captain Hazard, why did not you lead through the honours?—Ma'am, it was not the play—Pardon me, sir—but ma'am,—but sir—I would not play with you for straws; don't you know what Hoyle says?——If A and B are partners against C and D, and the game nine all, A and B have won three tricks, and C and D four tricks; C leads his suit, D puts up the king, then returns the suit; A passes, C puts up the queen, and B trumps it; and so A and B, and C and D are bandied about; they attack, they defend, and all is jargon and confusion, wrangling, noise, and nonsense; and high life, and polite conversation.—— Ha! ha! ha!

Mrs Bell. Ho! ho! the pencil of Hogarth could not do it better. And yet one is dragged to these places. One must play sometimes. We must let our friends pick our pockets now and then, or they drop our acquaintance. Do you ever play, my lord?

Love. Play, ma'am?—[*Aside.*] What does she mean? I must play the hypocrite to the end of

the chapter.—Play?—Now and then, as you say, one must, to oblige, and from necessity; but from taste or inclination, no; I never touch a card.

Mrs Bell. Oh! very true; I forgot. You dedicate your time to the muses; a downright rhyming peer. Do you know, my lord, that I am charmed with your song?

Love. Are you?

Mrs Bell. Absolutely; and I really think you would make an admirable Vauxhall poet.

Love. Nay, now you flatter me.

Mrs Bell. No, as I live; it is very pretty. And do you know that I can sing it already? Come, you shall hear how I murder it. I have no voice today, but you shall hear me. [*Sings.*

Attend, all ye fair, and I'll tell you the art,
To bind ev'ry fancy with ease in your chains;
To hold in soft fetters the conjugal heart,
And banish from Hymen his doubts and his pains.

When Juno was deck'd with the Cestus of Love,
At first she was handsome; she charming became:
With skill the soft passions it taught her to move,
To kindle at once, and to keep up the flame.

'Tis this gives the eyes all their magic and fire,
The voice melting accents; impassions the kiss;
Confers the sweet smile that awakens desire,
And plants round the fair each incentive to bliss.

Thence flows the gay chat, more than reason that charms;
The eloquent blush, that can beauty improve;
The fond sigh, the fond vow, the soft touch that alarms;
The tender disdain, the renewal of love.

Ye fair, take the Cestus, and practise its power:
The mind unaccomplish'd, mere features are vain;
With wit, with good humour, enliven each hour,
And the loves, and the graces, shall walk in your train.

Love. My poetry is infinitely obliged to you. It grows into sense as you sing it. Your voice, like the Cestus of Venus, bestows a grace upon every thing.

Mrs Bell. Oh! fulsome; I sing horridly. [*Goes to the glass.*] How do I look?—Don't tell me, my lord; you are studying a compliment, but I am resolved to mortify you; I won't hear it.——Well! have you thought of any thing? Let it pass; 'tis too late now. Pray, my lord, how came you to choose so grave a subject as connubial happiness?

Love. Close and particular that question! [*Aside.*

Mrs Bell. Juno! Hymen! doubts and pains! one would almost swear that you have a wife at home who sat for the picture.

Love. Ma'am, the—[*Embarrassed.*] The compliment—you are only laughing at me—the subject, from every day's experience—[*Aside.*] Does she suspect me?—the subject is common—Bachelors' wives, you know—ha! ha!——And when you inspire the thought; when you are the bright original, it is no wonder that the copy—

Mrs Bell. Horrid! going to harp on the old string. Odious solicitations! I hate all proposals, I am not in the humour. You must release me now; your visit is rather long. I have indulged you a great while. And besides, were I to listen to your vows, what would become of poor Sir Brilliant Fashion?

Love. Sir Brilliant Fashion?

Mrs Bell. Do you know him?

Love. I know whom you mean. I have seen him; but that's all. He lives with a strange set, and does not move in my sphere. If he is a friend of yours, I have no more to say.

Mrs Bell. Is there any thing to say against him?

Love. Nay, I have no knowledge of the gentleman. They who know him best, don't rate him high. A sort of current coin that passes in this town. You will do well to beware of counterfeits.

Mrs Bell. But this is very alarming——

Enter MIGNIONET, *in a violent Hurry.*

Mign. My dear madam, I am frighted out of my senses. The poor lady—where are the hartshorn drops?

Love. The lady! what lady?

Mign. Never stand asking what lady. She has fainted away all on a sudden; she is now in strong hysterics; give me the drops.

Mrs Bell. I must run to her assistance. Adieu, my lord. I shall be at home in the evening. Mignionet, step this way. Your lordship will excuse me: I shall expect to see you. Come, Mignionet, make haste; make haste.

[*Exit with* MIGNIONET.

Love. I hope the lady has not overheard me. What a villain am I to carry on this scheme against so much beauty, innocence, and merit! And to wear this badge of honour for the darkest purposes! And then my friend, Sir Brilliant, will it be fair to supplant him?——Pr'ythee, be quiet, my dear conscience! none of your meddling: don't interrupt a gentleman in his pleasures. Don't you know, my good friend, that love has no respect for persons, but soars above all laws of honour and of friendship? No reflection; have her I must, and that quickly too, or she will discover all. Besides, this is my wife's fault: why does not she make home agreeable? I am willing to be happy; I could be constant to her, but she is not formed for happiness. What the devil is madam Fortune about now?——[*Sir* BRILLIANT *sings within.*] Sir Brilliant, by all that's infamous. Confusion! no place to hide me! no escape! The door is locked. Mignionet, Mignionet, open the door.

Mign. [*Within.*] You must not come in here.

Love. What shall I do? This star, and this ribbon will bring me disgrace. Away with this tell-

tale evidence. [*Takes off the ribbon.*] Go, thou blushing devil, and hide thyself for ever.
[*Puts it in his pocket.*

Enter Sir BRILLIANT, *singing.*

Sir Bril. Mrs Bellmour, I have such a story for you.—How!—Lovemore?

Love. Your slave, Sir Brilliant, your slave.
[*Hiding the star with his hat,*

Sir Bril. I did not think you had been acquainted here.

Love. You are right. I came in quest of you. I saw the lady. I was drawn hither by mere curiosity. We have had some conversation: and I made it subservient to your purposes. I have been giving a great character of you.

Sir Bril. You are always at the service of your friends. But what's the matter? what are you fumbling about? [*Pulls the hat.*

Love. 'Sdeath! have a care: don't touch me.
[*Puts his handkerchief to his breast.*

Sir Bril. What the devil is the matter?

Love. Oh! keep off—[*Aside.*] Here's a business.—Taken in the old way: let me pass.—I have had a fling at Lord Etheridge: he will be out of favour with the widow: I have done you that good.—Racks and torments, my old complaint!
[*Wanting to pass him.*

Sir Bril. What complaint? You had better sit down.

Love. No, no; air, the air. I must have a surgeon. A stroke of a tennis-ball! My Lord Rackett's unlucky left-hand. Let me pass. There is something forming here. [*Passes him*] To be caught is the devil. [*Aside.*] Don't mention my name. You will counteract all I have said.—Oh! torture, torture!—I will explain to you another time. Sir Brilliant, yours. I have served your interest—Oh! there is certainly something forming! [*Exit.*

Sir Bril. What does all this mean?—So, so, Mrs Lovemore's suspicions are well founded.—The widow has her private visits, I see. Yes, yes; there is something forming here.

Enter Mrs BELLMOUR.

So; here she comes. The whole shall be explained. I hope, ma'am, that I don't interrupt you with any piquet-friend,

Mrs Bell. You are always a torment: what brings you hither?

Sir Bril. There are times, ma'am, when a visit—

Mrs Bell. Is unseasonable, and yours is so now. How can you tease me?

Sir Bril. I thought as much.—There are some things that may require to be discussed between us.

Mrs Bell. Reserve them all for another time. I cann't hear you now. You must leave me. There is a lady taken ill in the next room.

Sir. Bril. And here has been a gentleman taken ill in this room.

Mrs Bell. How troublesome! you must be gone. Do you dispute my will and pleasure?—Fly this moment.

Sir Bril. But ma'am—Nay, if you insist upon it— [*Goes.*

Mrs Bell. But, sir!—I will be absolute: you must leave me. [*Puts him out.*] There, and now I'll make sure of the door.

Enter Mrs LOVEMORE, *leaning on* MIGNIONET.

Mign. This way, madam: here is more air in this room.

Mrs Bell. How do you find yourself? Pray sit down.

Mrs Love. My spirits were too weak. I could not support it any longer; such a scene of perfidy!

Mrs Bell. You astonish me: what perfidy?

Mrs Love. Perfidy of the blackest dye; I told you that you were acquainted with my husband.

Mrs Bell. Acquainted with your husband!
[*Angrily.*

Mrs Love. A moment's patience—Yes, madam, you are acquainted with him.—The base man, who went hence but now——

Mrs Bell. Sir Brilliant Fashion?

Mrs Love. No; your Lord Etheridge as he calls himself——

Mrs Bell. Lord Etheridge! What of him, pray?

Mrs Love. False, dissembling man! he is my husband, ma'am: not Lord Etheridge, but plain Mr Lovemore; my Mr Lovemore.

Mrs Bell. And has he been base enough to assume a title to ensnare me to my undoing?

Mign. [*Going.*] Well, for certain, I believe the devil's in me: I always thought him a sly one.
[*Exit.*

Mrs Love. To see him carrying on this dark design,—to see the man whom I have ever esteemed and loved,—the man whom I must still love,—esteem him I fear I never can,—to see him before my face with that artful treachery! it was too much for sensibility like mine; I felt the shock too severely, and I sunk under it.

Mrs Bell. I am ready to sink this moment with amazement. I saw him for the first time, at old Mrs Loveit's. She introduced him to me. The appointment was of her own making.

Mrs Love. You know Mrs Loveit's character, I suppose.

Mrs Bell. The practised veteran!——Could I suspect that a woman, in her style of life, would lend herself to a vile stratagem against my honour? That she would join in a conspiracy against her own sex?—Mr Lovemore shall never enter these doors again—I am obliged to you, ma'am, for this visit; to me a providential incident. I am sorry for your share in it. The discovery secures my peace and happiness; to you it is a fatal conviction, a proof unanswerable against the person to whom you are joined for life.

Mrs Love. After this discovery, it cannot be for life. I am resolved not to pass another day under his roof.

Mrs Bell. Hold, hold: no sudden resolutions. Consider a little: passion is a bad adviser. This may take a turn for your adavantage.

Mrs Love. That can never be; I am lost beyond redemption.

Mrs Bell. Don't decide too rashly. Come, come, the man who has certain qualities, is worth thinking about, before one throws the hideous thing away for ever. Mr Lovemore is a traitor; but is not he still amiable? And besides, you have heard his sentiments. That song points at something. Perhaps you are a little to blame. He did not write upon such a subject, without a cause to suggest it. We will talk over this matter coolly. You saved me, and I must return the obligation. You shall stay dinner with me.

Mrs Love. Excuse me. Mr Lovemore may possibly go home. He shall hear of his guilt, while the sense of it pierces here, and wounds me to the quick.

Mrs Bell. Now there you are wrong; take my advice first. I will lay such a plan as may ensure him yours for ever. Come, come, you must not leave me yet. [*Takes her hand.*] Answer me one question; don't you still think he has qualities that do in some sort apologize for his vices?

Mrs Love. I don't know what to think of it; I hope he has.

Mrs Bell. Very well then. I have lost a lover; you may gain one. Your conduct upon this occasion may reform him; and let me tell you that the man, who has it in his power to atone for his faults, should not be entirely despised.——Let the wife exert herself; let her try her powers of pleasing, and take my word for it,

The wild gallant no more abroad will roam,
But find his loved variety at home. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in* LOVEMORE'S *House.*

Mr and Mrs LOVEMORE *at Table after Dinner: Servants taking Things out of the Room.*

Love. [*Filling a glass.*] I wonder you are not tired of the same eternal topic. [*Sipping his wine.*

Mrs Love. If I make it an eternal topic, it is for your own good, Mr Lovemore.

Love. I know I have your good wishes, and you have mine. All our absent friends, Mrs Lovemore. [*Drinks.*

Mrs Love. If you would but wish well to yourself, sir, I should be happy. But in the way you go on, your health must be ruined: day is night, and night day; your substance squandered; your constitution destroyed; and your family quite neglected.

Love. Family neglected! you see I dined at home, and this is my reward for it.

Mrs Love. You dined at home, sir, because something abroad has disconcerted you. You went, I suppose, after I saw you at Lady Constant's, to your old haunt, your friend, Mrs Loveit——

Love. Mrs Loveit! ha! ha! I dropt her acquaintance long ago. No, my love, I drove into the city, and spent the rest of the morning upon business. I had long accounts to settle with old Discount, the banker.

Mrs Love. And that to be sure engrossed all your time. Business must be minded. Did you find him at home?

Love. It was by his own appointment. I went to his house directly after I parted from you. I have been no where else. Matters of account always fatigue me.

Mrs Love. I would not be too inquisitive, sir.

Love. Oh! no; you never are. I staid at the banker's the rest of the time; and I came straight from his house to have the pleasure of dining with you. [*Fills a glass of wine.*]

Mrs Love. Were there any sincerity in that declaration, I should be happy. A tavern life has hitherto been your delight. I wonder what delight you can find in such an eternal round of gaming, riot, and dissipation. Will you answer me one question?

Love. With great pleasure,—[*Aside.*]—if it is not inconvenient.

Mrs Love. Lay your hand on your heart, and tell me,——Have I deserved this usage?

Love. My humble service to you, my love. [*Drinks.*

Mrs Love. I am sure I have never been deficient in any one point of the duty I owe you. You won my heart, and I gave it freely.

Love. [*Going to sleep.*] It is very true.

Mrs Love. Your interest has been mine. I have known no pleasure unconnected with your happiness. Diversions, show, and pomp, have had no allurements for me.

Love. [*Dropping asleep.*] Yes,—you are right—just as you please——

Mrs Love. Had I been inclined to follow the example of other women, your fortune would have felt it before now. You might have been thousands out of pocket; but your interest has been the object of my attention; and your convenience——

Love. [*Turns his chair from her.*] You reason very——you reason admir—ably—admir—ably——always——al—always——gay——and——enter—entertaining—— [*Going to sleep.*

Mrs Love. Marriage is generally considered as an introduction to the great scene of the world. I thought it a retreat to less noisy and serener pleasures. What is called polite company [*He falls fast asleep.*] was not my taste. You was lavish in expence; I was, therefore, an œconomist. From the moment marriage made me yours, the pleasure arising from your company—There! fast asleep! Agreeable company indeed!—This is ever his way. [*She rises.*] Unfeeling man!—It is too plain that I am grown his aversion. Mr Lovemore! [*Looking at him.*] you little think what a scene this day has brought to light.—And

yet he hopes with falsehood to varnish and disguise his treachery. How mean the subterfuge! shall I rouse him now, and tax him with his guilt? My heart is too full: reproach will only tend to exasperate, and perhaps make him irreconcileable. The pride that can stoop to low and wretched artifice, but ill can brook detection Let him rest for the present. The Widow Bellmour's experiment may answer better. I will try it. at least. Oh! Mr Lovemore, you will break my heart!

[*Looks at him, and exit.*

Love. [*Talking in his sleep.*] I do listen—I am not asleep. [*Sleeps and nods.*] You are very right; —always right—I am only thinking a little. No —no—no [*Mutters indistinctly.*] It was not two o'clock—in bed—in bed by twelve—Sir Bashful is an oaf—The Widow Bellmour—[*Sleeps, and his head rolls about.*] What's the matter? [*Waking.*] I beg your pardon; I was beginning to nod. What did you say, my dear? [*Leans on the table, without looking about.*] One cannot always, you know —[*Turns about.*] 'Sdeath! she is gone! Oh! fast asleep. This is ever the way when one dines at home. Let me shake it off. [*Rises.*] What's o'clock?—No amusement in this house; what shall I do? The widow?—I must not venture in that quarter. My evil genius, Sir Brilliant, will be busy there. Is any body in the way? I must sally out. My dear Venus, favour your votary this afternoon:

———Your best arms employ,
All wing'd with pleasure, and all tipt with joy.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to Sir* BASHFUL'S.

Enter Lady CONSTANT *and* FURNISH.

Lady Cons. Who brought this letter?

Fur. A servant of Mrs Lovemore's: he waits an answer.

Lady Cons. My compliments to Mrs Lovemore, and I shall wait upon her.

Fur. Yes, ma'am. [*Going.*

Lady Cons. And hark ye, Furnish;—have the things been carried to Sir Brilliant, as I ordered?

Fur. I have obeyed your ladyship's commands. The steward went himself. Mr Pounce, your ladyship knows, is a trusty body. You may depend upon his care.

Lady Cons. Go, and send Mrs Lovemore her answer. She may depend upon my being with her in time. [*Exit* FURNISH.] What can Mrs Lovemore want? [*Reads,*] "Ladyship's company to a card-party; but cards are the least part of my object. I have something of higher moment in view, and the presence of my friends is absolutely necessary." There is some mystery in all this. What does she mean? I shall go, and then the scene will clear up: those diamond buckles embarrass me more than Mrs Lovemore's unintelligible letter. Diamond buckles to me! From what quarter? Who could send them? Nobody but Sir Brilliant. I am right in my conclusion: they came from him. Who could take the liberty but a person of his cast? A presuming man! But I have mortified his vanity. Before this time, he has found his diamonds thrown back upon his hands, with the disdain which such confidence deserves. But if I have made a mistake!—Oh! no; no danger. Has not Sir Brilliant made overtures to me? Has not he declared himself? He sees Sir Bashful's behaviour, and his vanity plumes itself upon that circumstance. To give me my revenge against a crazy and insufferable husband, he would fain induce me to ruin myself with a coxcomb. Besides; he heard the whole of Sir Bashful's dispute about diamonds and trinkets: the thing is clear; it was Sir Brilliant sent them; and by that stratagem he hopes to bribe me into compliance. That bait will never take; though here comes one, who, I am sure, deserves to be treated without a grain of ceremony.

Enter Sir BASHFUL.

Sir Bash. Here she is. Now let me see whether she will take any notice of the present I sent her. She has reason to be in good humour, I think. —Your servant, madam.

Lady Cons. Your address is polite, sir.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] Still proud and obstinate! —Has any thing happened to disturb the harmony of your temper?

Lady Cons. Considering what little discord you make, it is a wonder that my temper is not always in tune.

Sir Bash. If you never gave me cause, madam——

Lady Cons. Oh! for mercy's sake, truce with altercation. I am tired out with the eternal violence of your temper. Those frequent starts of passion hurry me out of my senses: and those unaccountable whims, that hold such constant possession of you——

Sir Bash. Whims, madam?—Not to comply with you in every thing, is a whim, truly. Must I yield to the exorbitant demands of your extravagance? When you laid close siege to me for diamond baubles, and I know not what, was that a whim of mine? Did I take that fancy into my head without cause, and without sufficient foundation?

Lady Cons. Well, we have exhausted the subject. Have not you told me a thousand times that there is no living with me? I agree to it. And have not I returned the compliment? We have nothing new to say; and now, all that remains, is to let the lawyer reduce to writing our mutual opinions, and so we may part with the pleasure of giving each other a most woeful character.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] The buckles have had no effect. Stubborn! she has received them, and won't own it.

Lady Cons. A dash of your pen, sir, at the foot of certain articles now preparing, will make us both easy. [*Going.*

Sir Bash. If we don't live happily, it is your own fault.

Lady Cons. That is very odd.

Sir Bash. If you would control your passion for play——

Lady Cons. Quite threadbare!

Sir Bash. I have still a regard for you.

Lady Cons. Worn-out to frippery!—I cann't hear any more. The law will dress it up in new language for us, and that will end our differences. [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. [*Alone.*] I must unburthen my heart: there is no time to be lost. I love her; I admire her; she inflames my tenderest passions, and raises such a conflict here in my very heart, I cannot any longer conceal the secret from her. I'll go and tell her all this moment. But then that meddling fiend, her maid, will be there: po! I can turn her out of the room: but then the jade will suspect something. Her ladyship may be alone: I'll send to know where she is. Who is there? Sideboard——

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Sir Bash. Go and tell your lady that—— [*Pauses.*

Side. Did your honour want me?

Sir Bash. No matter; it does not signify.—[*Aside.*] I shall never be able to tell her my mind: a glance of her eye, and my own confusion, will undo all.

Side. I thought your honour called.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] A thought comes across me; I'll write her a letter. Yes, yes, a letter will do the business. Sideboard, draw that table this way—Reach me a chair.

Side. There, your honour.

Sir Bash. Do you stay while I write a letter. You shall carry it for me. [*Sits down to write.*

Side. Yes, sir.—I hope he has an intrigue upon his hands. A servant thrives under a master that has his private amusements. Love on, say I, if you are so given; it will bring grist to my mill.

Sir Bash. [*Writing.*] This will surprise her. Warm, passionate, and tender! and yet it does not come up to what I feel.

Side. What is he at?—I may as well read the newspaper. [*Takes it out of his pocket*] What, in the name of wonder, is all this?—Ha, ha! [*Bursts into a loud laugh.*] I never heard the like of this before. Oh, ho, ho, ho!

Sir Bash. What does the scoundrel mean? [*Stares at him.*

Side. Ha, ha, ha! I cann't help laughing.

Sir Bash. Does the villain suspect me? [*Rises.*] Hark ye, sirrah, if ever I find that you dare listen at any door in my house—

Side. Sir!

Sir Bash. Confess the truth: have not you been listening to my conversation with Mr Lovemore this morning?

Side. Who, I, sir? I would not be guilty of such a thing: I never did the like in all my days.

Sir Bash. What was you laughing at?

Side. A foolish thing in the newspaper, sir, that's all. I'll read it to your honour. [*Reads*] "We hear that a new comedy is now in rehearsal, and will speedily be performed, intitled, *The Amorous Husband; or, The Man in love with his own Wife.*"

Sir Bash. And what do you see to laugh at?

Side. See, sir? I have lived in a great many families, and never heard of the like before.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] There, there, there!—I shall be the butt of my own servants.—Sirrah, leave the room. And let me never hear that you have the trick of listening in my house.

Side. No, sir—The Man in Love with his own Wife! [*Exit laughing.*

Sir Bash. What does the varlet mean?—No matter—I have finished my letter, and it shall be sent this moment.——But then, if I should get into a comedy? Po! no more scruples. I'll seal it directly—Sideboard—

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Sir Bash. [*Sealing the letter.*] I have opened my heart to her. What do you bring your hat and stick for?

Side. To go out with your honour's letter.

Sir Bash. You have not far to go. Take this, and let nobody see you.

Side. I warrant me, your honour. [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. I feel much lighter now. A load is taken off my heart.

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Sir Bash. What do you come back for?

Side. A word or two, by way of direction, if you please, sir.

Sir Bash. Blockhead! give it to me—[*Aside.*] If I direct it, he finds me out.—Go about your business: I have no occasion for you: leave the room.

Side. Very well, sir.—Does he think to manage his own intrigues? If he takes my commission out of my hands, I shall give him warning. The vices of our masters are all the vails a poor servant has left. [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. What must be done?—Mr Lovemore could conduct this business for me. He is a man of address, and knows all the approaches to a woman's heart. That fellow Sideboard coming again?—No, no; this is lucky. Mr Lovemore, I am glad to see you.

Enter LOVEMORE.

Love. A second visit, you see, in one day; entirely on the score of friendship.

Sir Bash. And I thank you for it; heartly thank you.

Love. I broke away from the company at the St Alban's, on purpose to attend you. Well, I have made your lady easier in her mind, have not I?

Sir Bash. We don't hit it at all, Mr Lovemore.

Love. No!

Sir Bash. I think she has been rather worse since you spoke to her.

Love. A good symptom that. [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. She has received the diamond buckles. They were delivered to her maid sealed up,

and the man never staid to be asked a question. I saw them in her own hand; but not a syllable escaped her. She was not in the least softened —obstinate as a mule!

Love. The manner of conveying your presents was not well judged. Why did you not make me the bearer?

Sir Bash. I wish I had. She talks of parting; and so, to avoid coming to extremities, I have even thought of telling her the whole truth at once.

Love. How? acquaint her with your passion?

Sir Bash. Ay, and trust to her honour. I could not venture to speak; I should blush, and faulter, and look silly; and so I have writ a letter to her. Here it is, signed and sealed, but not directed. I got into a puzzle about that. Servants, you know, are always putting their own construction upon things.

Love. No doubt: and then your secret flies all over the town.

Sir Bash. That's what alarmed me. You shall write the superscription, and send it to her.

Love. No, that won't do. Give her a letter under your hand! I'll speak to her for you: let me try how her pulse beats.

Sir Bash. But a letter may draw an answer from her, and then you know [*Smiling at him.*] I shall have it under her hand.

Love. I don't like this hurry: we had better take time to consider of it.

Sir Bash. No, I cann't defer the business of my heart a single moment. It burns like a fever here. Sit down, and write the direction; I'll step and send the servant. He shall carry it, as if it were a letter from yourself.

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Side. Sir Brilliant Fashion is below, sir.

Love. What brings him? He will only interrupt us. Go and talk to him, Sir Bashful; hear what he has to say; amuse him; any thing rather than let him come up.

Sir Bash. I am gone: he sha'n't molest you.

[*Exit with* SIDEBOARD.

Love. Fly, make haste; and don't let him know that I am here.—A lucky accident this; I have gained time by it. All matters were in a right train, and he himself levelling the road for me, and now this letter blows me up into the air at once. Some unlucky planet rules to-day. First the Widow Bellmour; a hair-breadth 'scape I had of it, and now almost ruined here! What, in the name of wonder, has he writ to her?—Friendship and wafer, by your leave.—But will that be delicate?—Po! honour has always a great deal to preach upon these occasions; but then the business of my love!—Very true; the passions need but say a word, and their business is done. [*Opens the letter and reads.*] This must never reach her. I'll write a letter from myself. [*Sits down, writes, and starts up.*] I hear him coming: no; all safe. [*Writes.*] This will do:—vastly well. Her husband's inhumanity! Ay, mention that.—The diamonds may be a present from me: yes, I'll venture it—There, there; that will do—Long adored—Ay—sweetest revenge.———Ay—Eternal admirer———Lovemore.——Now, now let me see it. —Admirable! this will do the business.

[*Seals the letter.*

Enter Sir BASHFUL.

Sir Bash. Well, have you sent it?

Love. Not yet: I am writing the direction.

Sir Bash. And where is that blockhead?—— Sideboard!

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Sir Bash. Numskull, why don't you wait?— Mr Lovemore wants you.

Love. Step and deliver this to your lady, and, if she pleases, I will wait upon her.

Sir Bash. Charming!—Take it up stairs directly.

Side. Up stairs, sir? My lady is in the next room.

Sir Bash. Take it to her; make haste; begone. [*Exit* SIDEBOARD.] I hope this will succeed: I shall be for ever obliged to you, and so will her ladyship.

Love. I hope she will, and I shall be proud to serve her.

Sir Bash. You are very good. She won't prove ungrateful, I dare answer for her.—I should like to see how she receives the letter.—The door is conveniently open.—I will have a peep. Ay, there; there she sits.

Love. Where, Sir Bashful?

Sir Bash. Hush, no noise.——There, do you see her? She has the letter in her hand——This is a critical moment: I am all over in a tremble.

Love. Silence; not a word. She opens it.— [*Aside.*] Now, my dear Cupid, befriend me now, and your altar shall smoke with incense.

Sir Bash. She colours!

Love. I like that rising blush; a soft and tender token.

Sir Bash. She turns pale.

Love. The natural working of the passions.

Sir Bash. And now she reddens again.—What is she at now?—There she has torn the letter in two!—I am a lost, undone man. [*Walks away.*

Love. She has flung it away with indignation; I am undone too.

[*Aside, and walks away from the door.*

Sir Bash. Mr Lovemore, you see what it is all come to.

Love. I am sorry to see so haughty a spirit.

Sir Bash. An arrogant, ungrateful woman! to make such a return to so kind a letter!

Love. Ay, so kind a letter!

Sir Bash. Did you ever see such an insolent scorn?

Love. I never was so disappointed in all my life.

Sir Bash. A letter full of the tenderest protestations!

Love. Yes; an unreserved declaration of love!

Sir Bash. Made with the greatest frankness; throwing myself at her very feet.

Love. Did she once smile? was there the faintest gleam of approbation in her countenance?

Sir Bash. She repaid it all with scorn, with pride, contempt, and insolence. I cannot bear this; despised, spurned, and treated like a puppy.

Love. There it stings——like a puppy, indeed!

Sir Bash. Is there a thing in nature so mortifying to the pride of man, as to find oneself rejected and despised by a fine woman, who is conscious of her power, and triumphs in her cruelty?

Love. It is the most damnable circumstance!—

Sir Bash. My dear Mr Lovemore, I am obliged to you for taking this matter so much to heart.

Love. I take it more to heart than you are aware of.

Sir Bash. This is mortifying; enough to make one ashamed all the rest of one's life.

Love. I did not expect this sullen ill-humour.

Sir Bash. Did you ever know so obstinate, so uncomplying a temper?

Enter Sir BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. Sir Bashful, I forgot to tell you——

Love. He again! he haunts me up and down, as the vice did the devil, with a dagger of lath, in the old comedy. [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. Hey!—what's the matter?—You seem both out of humour: what does this mean? Have you quarrelled?

Sir Bash. No, sir, no quarrel:—Why would my booby servant let him in again? [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. Strike me stupid, but you look very queer upon it.—Lovemore is borrowing money, I suppose: Sir Bashful is driving a hard bargain, and you cann't agree about the premium. Sir Bashful, let my friend Lovemore have the money.

Sir Bash. Money!——what does he mean?

Sir Bril. Both out of humour, I see: well, as you will. You have no reason to be in harmony with yourselves; my stars shine with a kinder aspect. Here, here, behold a treasure of love. I came back on purpose to shew it to you. [*Takes a shagreen case out of his pocket.*] See what a present I have received; a magnificent pair of diamond buckles, by all that's amiable.

Love. How?

Sir Bash. [*Walking up to him.*] A pair of diamond buckles!

Sir Bril. How such a present should be sent to me is more than I can explain at present. Perhaps my friend Lovemore gained some intelligence in the quarter where I surprised him today, on a visit which I little suspected.

Love. That was to serve you: I know nothing of this business.

Sir Bril. The pain in your side, I hope, is better?

Love. Po! this is only to distract your attention, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. So I suppose. And was this a present to you?

Sir Bril. A present, sir. The consequence of having some tolerable phrase, a person, and a due degree of attention to the service of the ladies.—Don't you envy me, Sir Bashful?

Sir Bash. I cann't but say I do.—[*Turns to* LOVEMORE.] My buckles, by all that's false in woman!

Love. Take no notice.——[*Walks aside.*] Has he supplanted me here too, as well as with the widow?

Sir Bril. What's the matter with you both?——Burning with envy!

Sir Bash. And I suppose an elegant epistle, or a well-penned billet-doux, accompanied this token of the lady's affection.

Sir Bril. That would have been an agreeable addition, but it is still to come. Too many favours at once might overwhelm a body. A country-looking fellow, as my people tell me, left this, curiously sealed up, at my house: he would not say from whence he came: I should know that in time, was all they could get from him, and I am now panting to learn from whence this mighty success has attended me. Sir Bashful, I came, saw, and conquered.—Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Sir Bash. But may not this be from some lady, who imagines that you sent it, and therefore chooses to reject your present?

Sir Bril. Oh, no; that cannot be the case. A little knowledge of the world would soon convince you that ladies do not usually reject presents from the man who has the good fortune to please by his manner, his taste for dress, and a certain *je ne sçai quoi* in his person and conversation.

Sir Bash. So I believe.—[*Walks aside.*] What say you to this, Mr Lovemore?

Love. She would not have torn a letter from him.

Sir Bril. No, Sir Bashful; a present from me would not have been returned back upon my hands.

Sir Bash. I dare say not.—[*To* LOVEMORE.] I suppose she will give my three hundred pounds into the bargain.

Love. After this, I shall wonder at nothing.

Sir Bril. What mortified countenances they both put on! [*Looks at them, and laughs.*

Sir Bash. [*Walking up to Sir* BRILLIANT.] And I suppose you expect to have this lady?

Sir Bril. No doubt of it. This is the forerunner, I think.—Hey, Lovemore?—Sir Bashful, this it is to be in luck. Ha! ha!

[*Laughs at them both.*

Love. and Sir Bash. [*Both forcing a laugh.*] Ha! ha!

Sir Bril. You both seem strangely piqued.—Lovemore, what makes you so uneasy?

Love. You flatter yourself, and you wrong me—I—I— [*Walks away.*

Sir Bash. He is a true friend: he is uneasy on my account. [*Aside, and looking at* LOVEMORE.

Sir Bril. And, Sir Bashful, something has dashed your spirits. Do you repine at my success?

Sir Bash. I cann't but say I do, sir.

Sir Bril. Oh! very well; you are not disposed to be good company. *A l'honneur*, gentlemen: finish your money matters. Lovemore, where do you spend the evening?

Love. A good evening to you, Sir Brilliant: I

am engaged.—Business with Sir Bashful, you see——

Sir Bril. Well, don't let me be of inconvenience to you. Fare ye well, gentlemen. Thou dear pledge of love, [*Looking at the buckles,*] thus let me clasp thee to my heart.——Sir Bashful, your servant. [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. What think you now, Mr Lovemore?

Love. All unaccountable, sir.

Sir Bash. By all that's false, I am gulled, cheated, and imposed upon. I am deceived, and dubbed a rank cuckold. It is too clear: she has given him the buckles, and I suppose my banknotes have taken the same course.—Diamond buckles, and three hundred pounds, for Sir Brilliant!—A reward for his merit!

Love. He is the favourite, and I have been working for him all this time.

Sir Bash. I now see through all her artifices.—My resolution is fixed.—If I can but get ocular demonstration of her guilt; if I can but get the means of proving to the whole world that she is vile enough to cuckold me, I shall then be happy.

Love. Why, that will be some consolation!

Sir Bash. So it will: kind heaven grant me that at least; make it plain that she dishonours me, and I am amply revenged.—Hark! I hear her coming.—She shall know all I think, and all I feel.—I have done with her for ever.

Love. [*Aside.*] Let me fly the impending storm. If I stay, detection and disgrace pursue me!—— Sir Bashful, I am sorry to see matters take this turn. I have done all in my power, and, since there is no room to hope for success, I take my leave, and wish you a good night.

Sir Bash. No, no; you shall not leave me in this distress.—You shall hear me tell her her own, and be a witness of our separation.

[*Holding him.*

Love. Excuse me: after what has passed, I shall never be able to endure the sight of her.—Fare you well; I must be gone; good night, Sir Bashful. [*Struggling to go.*

Sir Bash. You are my best friend: I cannot part with you. [*Stands between him and the door.*] Stay and hear what she has to say for herself; you will see what a turn she will give to the business.

Love. [*Aside.*] What turn shall I give it?—— Confusion! here she comes: I must weather the storm.

Enter Lady CONSTANT.

Lady Cons. After this behaviour, Mr Lovemore, I am surprised, sir, that you can think of staying a moment longer in this house.

Love. Madam, I——'Sdeath! I have no invention to assist me at a pinch. [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. Mr Lovemore is my friend, madam, and I desire he will stay in my house as long as he pleases.—Hey, Lovemore!

[*Looks at him, and smiles.*

Love. [*Aside.*] All must out, I fear.

Lady Cons. Your friend, Sir Bashful!—And do you authorise him to take this unbecoming liberty?—Have you given him permission to send me a letter, so extravagant in the very terms of it?

Love. [*Aside.*] Ay, now 'tis coming, and impudence itself has not a word to say.

Sir Bash. I desired him to send that letter, madam.

Love. Sir Bashful desired me, ma'am.

[*Bowing respectfully.*

Sir Bash. I desired him.

Love. All at his request, ma'am.

Lady Cons. And am I to be made your sport?—I wonder, Mr Lovemore, that you would condescend to make yourself a party in so poor a plot. Do you presume upon a trifling mark of civility, which you persuaded me to accept of this morning? Do you come disguised under a mask of friendship to help this gentleman in his design against my honour and my happiness?

Love. [*Aside.*] Fairly caught, and nothing can bring me off——

Sir Bash. A mask of friendship!—He is a true friend, madam; he sees how ill I am treated, and, let me tell you, there is not a word of truth in that letter.

Love. Not a syllable of truth, ma'am—[*Aside.*] This will do: his own nonsense will save me.

Sir Bash. It was all done to try you, madam.

Love. Nothing more, ma'am: merely to try you.

Sir Bash. By way of experiment only: just to see how you would behave upon it.

Love. Nothing else was intended; all to try you, ma'am.

Lady Cons. You have been both notably employed. The exploit is worthy of you. Your snare is spread for a woman, and if you had succeeded, the fame of so bright an action would add mightily to two such illustrious characters.

Sir Bash. A snare spread for her! Mark that, Mr Lovemore: she calls it ensnaring.

Love. Ensnared to her own good. [*To Sir* BASHFUL.]—He has pleaded admirably for me.

[*Aside.*

Lady Cons. As to you, Sir Bashful, I have long ago ceased to wonder at your conduct: you have lost the power of surprising me; but when Mr Lovemore becomes an accomplice in so mean a plot——

Sir Bash. I am in no plot, madam, and no body wants to ensnare you; do we, Lovemore?

Love. Sir Bashful knows that no harm was intended.

Sir Bash. Yes, I am in the secret, and my friend Lovemore meant no harm.

Love. If the letter had succeeded, Sir Bashful knows there would have been no ill consequence.

Sir Bash. No harm in nature; but I now see how things are; and since your ladyship will listen to nothing for your own good, it is too plain, from all that has passed between us, that our

tempers are by no means fitted for each other, and I am ready to part whenever you please: nay, I will part.

Lady Cons. And that is the only point in which we can agree, sir.

Sir Bash. Had the letter been sent from another quarter, it would have met with a better reception: we know where your smiles are bestowed.

Lady Cons. Deal in calumny, sir; give free scope to malice; I disdain your insinuations.

Sir Bash. The fact is too clear, and reproaches are now too late. This is the last of our conversing together; and you may take this by the way, you are not to believe one syllable of that letter.

Love. There is not a syllable of it deserves the least credit, ma'am.

Sir Bash. It was all a mere joke, madam: was not it, Lovemore?—And as to your being a fine woman, and as to any passion that any body has conceived for you, there was no such thing; you can witness for me, Lovemore: cann't you?

Lady Cons. Oh! you are witnesses for one another.

Love. Sir Bashful knows the fairness of my intentions, and I know his.—[*Aside.*] He has acquitted me better than I expected, thanks to his absurdity.

Lady Cons. Go on, and aggravate your ill usage, gentlemen.

Sir Bash. It was all a bam, madam, a scene we thought proper to act. Let us laugh at her.

[*Goes up to* LOVEMORE.

Love. With all my heart—[*Aside.*] A silly blockhead! I cann't help laughing at him.

[*Laughing heartily.*

Sir Bash. [*Laughing with him.*] Ha! ha! ha!—all a bam; nothing else; a contrivance to make sport for ourselves—hey, Lovemore?

Lady Cons. This usage is insupportable. I shall not stay for an explanation. Two such worthy confederates!—Is my chair ready there? You may depend, sir, that this is the last time you will see me in this house. [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. Agreed; a bargain; with all my heart. Lovemore, I have managed this well.

Love. Charmingly managed! I did not think you had so much spirit.

Sir Bash. I have found her out. The intrigue is too plain. She and Sir Brilliant are both detected.

Love. I never suspected that Sir Brilliant was the happy man. I wish I had succeeded, had it been only to mortify his vanity.

Sir Bash. And so do I: I wish it too: but never own the letter: deny it to the last.

Love. You may depend upon my secrecy.

Sir Bash. I am for ever obliged to you. A foolish woman! how she stands in her own light.

Love. Truly I think she does. But since I have no interest with her ladyship, I shall now sound a retreat, and leave matters to your own discretion. Success attend you. [*Going.*

Sir Bash. You must not forsake me in this distress.

Love. Had your lady proved tractable, I should not have cared how long I had staid. But since things are come to this pass, I shall now go and see what kind of reception I am to meet with from Mrs Lovemore.

Sir Bash. Don't let her know that you have a regard for her.

Love. Oh! no; I see the consequence.—[*Aside.*] Well off this time; and, madam Fortune, if I trust you again, you shall play me what prank you please. Sir Bashful, yours. [*Going.*

Sir Bash. A thousand thanks to you. And, hark ye, if I can serve you with your lady———

Love. I am much obliged to you: but I shall endeavour to go on, without giving you the trouble of assisting me. And, do you hear? assure my Lady Constant, that I meant nothing but to serve your interest. [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. Rely upon my management. I can acquit you.—My Lady Constant! Lady Constant!—Let me chase her from my thoughts: can I do it? Rage, fury, love—no more of love! I am glad she tore the letter. Odso! yonder it lies. It is only torn in two, and she may still piece the fragments together. I'll pick up the letter this moment: it shall never appear in evidence against me. As to Sir Brilliant, his motions shall be watched; I know how to proceed with madam, and if I can but prove the fact, every body will say that I am ill used by her. [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment at Mr* LOVEMORE'S.

Enter Mrs LOVEMORE, *elegantly dressed;* MUSLIN *following her.*

Mus. Why, to be sure, ma'am, it is so for certain, and you are very much in the right of it.

Mrs Love. I fancy I am: I see the folly of my former conduct. I am determined never to let my spirits sink into a melancholy state again.

Mus. Why that's the very thing, ma'am; the very thing I have been always preaching up to you. Did not I always say, see company, ma'am, take your pleasure, and never break your heart for any man? This is what I always said.

Mrs Love. And you have said enough: spare yourself the trouble now.

Mus. I always said so. And what did the world say? Heavens bless her for a sweet woman! and a plague go with him for an inhuman, barbarous, bloody, murdering brute.

Mrs Love. Well, truce with your impertinence! your tongue runs on at such a rate.

Mus. Nay, don't be angry: they did say so indeed. But, dear heart, how every body will be overjoyed when they find you have plucked up a little! As for me, it gives me new life, to have so much company in the house, and such a racketting at the door with coaches and chairs, enough to hurry a body out of one's wits. Lard, this is

another thing, and you look quite like another thing, ma'am, and that dress quite becomes you. I suppose, ma'am you will never wear your negligee again. It is not fit for you indeed, ma'am. It might pass very well with some folks, ma'am, but the like of you——

Mrs Love. Will you never have done? Go and see who is coming up stairs.

Enter Mrs BELLMOUR.

Mrs Love. Mrs Bellmour, I revive at the sight of you. Muslin, do you step and do as I ordered you.

Mus. What the deuce can she be at now? [*Exit.*

Mrs Bell. You see I am punctual to my time. ——Well, I admire your dress of all things. It's mighty pretty.

Mrs Love. I am glad you like it. But, under all this appearance of gaiety, I have at the bottom but an aching heart.

Mrs Bell. Be ruled by me, and I'll answer for the event. Why really, now you look just as you should do.—Why neglect so fine a figure?

Mrs Love. You are so obliging!

Mrs Bell. And so true.——What was beautiful before, is now heightened by the additional ornaments of dress; and if you will but animate and inspire the whole with those graces of the mind which I am sure you possess, the impression cannot fail of being effectual upon all beholders; even upon the depraved mind of Mr Lovemore.—— You have not seen him since, have you?

Mrs Love. He dined at home, but was soon upon the wing to his usual haunts.

Mrs Bell. If he does but come home time enough, depend upon it my plot will take. And have you got together a good deal of company?

Mrs Love. Yes, a tolerable party.

Mrs Bell. That's right: shew him that you will consult your own pleasure.

Mrs Love. Apropos, as soon as I came home I received a letter from Sir Brilliant, in a style of warmth and tenderness that would astonish you. He begs to see me again, and has something particular to communicate. I left it in my dressing-room; you shall see it by and by: I took your advice, and sent him word he might come. The lure brought him hither immediately: he makes no doubt of his success with me.

Mrs Bell. Well! two such friends as Sir Brilliant and Mr Lovemore, I believe never existed!

Mrs Love. Their falsehood to each other is unparalleled. I left Sir Brilliant at the card-table: as soon as he can disengage himself, he will quit his company in pursuit of me. I forgot to tell you, my Lady Constant is here.

Mrs Bell. Is she?

Mrs Love. She is, and has been making the strangest discovery: Mr Lovemore has had a design there too!

Mrs Bell. Oh! I don't doubt him; but the more proof we have the better.

Mrs Love. There is sufficient proof; you must know, ma'am—[*A rap at the door.*] As I live and breathe, I believe this is Mr Lovemore.

Mrs Bell. If it is, every thing goes on as I could wish.

Mrs Love. I hear his voice, it is he. How my heart beats!

Mrs Bell. Courage, and the day's our own. He must not see me yet; where shall I run?

Mrs Love. In there, ma'am. Make haste; I hear his step on the stairs.

Mrs Bell. Success attend you. I am gone. [*Exit.*

Mrs Love. I am frightened out of my senses. What the event may be I fear to think; but I must go through with it.

Enter LOVEMORE.

Mrs Love. You are welcome home, sir.

Love. Mrs Lovemore, your servant. [*Without looking at her.*]

Mrs Love. It is somewhat rare to see you at home so early.

Love. I said I should come home, did not I? I always like to be as good as my word.—What could the widow mean by this usage? to make an appointment, and break it thus abruptly! [*Aside.*

Mrs Love. He seems to muse upon it. [*Aside.*

Love. [*Aside.*] She does not mean to do so treacherous a thing as to jilt me? Oh Lord, I am wonderfully tired.

[*Yawns, and sinks into an armed chair.*

Mrs Love. Are you indisposed, my dear?

Love. No, my love; I thank you, I am very well;—a little fatigued only, with jolting over the stones all the way into the city this morning. I have paid a few visits this afternoon.—Confoundedly tired.——Where's William?

Mrs Love. Do you want any thing?

Love. Only my cap and slippers. I am not in spirits, I think. [*Yawns.*

Mrs Love. You are never in spirits at home, Mr Lovemore.

Love. I beg your pardon; I never am any where more cheerful. [*Stretching his arms.*] I wish I may die if I an't very happy at home,——very, [*Yawns.*] very happy!

Mrs Love. I can hear otherwise. I am informed that Mr Lovemore is the promoter of mirth and good humour wherever he goes.

Love. Oh! no, you over-rate me; upon my soul you do.

Mrs Love. I can hear, sir, that no person's company is so acceptable to the ladies; that your wit inspires every thing; you have your compliment for one, your smile for another, a whisper for a third, and so on, sir; you divide your favours, and are every where, but at home, all whim, vivacity, and spirit.

Love. Ho! ho! [*Laughing.*] how can you talk so? I swear I cann't help laughing at the fancy. All whim, vivacity, and spirit! I shall burst my sides. How can you banter one so?——I divide my favours too!——Oh, heavens! I cann't stand this raillery; such a description of me!—I that am rather saturnine, of a serious cast, and inclined to be pensive! I cann't help laughing at the oddity of the conceit.——Oh! Lord! Oh Lord! [*Laughs.*

Mrs Love. Just as you please, sir. I see that I am ever to be treated with indifference, [*Walks across the stage.*]

Love. [*Rises and walks a contrary way.*] I cann't put this Widow Bellmour out of my head. [*Aside.*

Mrs Love. If I had done any thing to provoke this usage, this cold, determined contempt—

[*Walking.*

Love. I wish I had done with that business entirely; but my desires are kindled, and must be satisfied. [*Aside.*

[*They walk for some time silently by each other.*]

Mrs Love. What part of my conduct gives you offence, Mr Lovemore?

Love. Still harping upon that ungrateful string! but pr'ythee don't set me a-laughing again.——Offence!—nothing gives me offence, child!—you know I am very fond—[*Yawns and walks*]—I like you of all things, and think you a most admirable wife;—prudent, managing,—careless of your own person, and very attentive to mine;—not much addicted to pleasure,—grave, retired and domestic; you govern your house, pay the tradesmen's bills, [*Yawns.*] scold the servants, and love your husband:—upon my soul, a very good wife!—as good a sort of a wife [*Yawns.*] as a body might wish to have.—Where's William? I must go to bed.

Mrs Love. To bed so early! Had not you better join the company?

Love. I sha'n't go out to-night.

Mrs Love. But I mean the company in the dining-room.

Love. Company in the dining-room!

[*Stares at her.*

Mrs Love. Yes: I invited them to a rout.

Love. A rout in my house!—and you dressed out too!—What is all this?

Mrs Love. You have no objection, I hope.

Love. Objection!—No, I like company, you know, of all things; I'll go and join them: who are they all?

Mrs Love. You know 'em all; and there's your friend, Sir Brilliant.

Love. Is he there? I shall be glad to see him. But, pray, how comes all this about?

Mrs Love. I intend to see company often.

Love. Do you?

Mrs Love. Ay, and not look tamely on, while you revel luxuriously in a course of pleasure. I shall pursue my own plan of diversion.

Love. Do so, ma'am; the change in your temper will not be disagreeable.

Mrs Love. And so I shall, sir, I assure you.—Adieu to melancholy, and welcome pleasure, wit, and gaiety. [*She walks about and sings.*

Love. What the devil has come over her? And what, in the name of wonder, does all this mean?

Mrs Love. Mean, sir!—It means, it means—how can you ask me what it means?—Well, to be sure, the sobriety of that question!—Do you think a woman of spirit can have leisure to tell her meaning, when she is all air, alertness, rapture, and enjoyment?

Love. She is mad!—stark mad!

Mrs Love. You're mistaken, sir,—not mad, but in spirits, that's all. Am I too flighty for you?—Perhaps I am: you are of a saturnine disposition, inclined to think a little or so. Well, don't let me interrupt you; don't let me be of any inconvenience. That would be the unpolitest thing; a married couple to be interfering and encroaching on each other's pleasures! Oh, hideous! it would be Gothic to the last degree. Ha, ha, ha!

Love. [*Forcing a laugh.*] Ha, ha!—Ma'am, you—ha, ha! you are perfectly right.

Mrs Love. Nay, but I don't like that laugh now: I positively don't like it. Cann't you laugh out as you were used to do? For my part, I'm determined to do nothing else all the rest of my life.

Love. This is the most astonishing thing! Ma'am, I don't rightly comprehend——

Mrs Love. Oh Lud! oh Lud!—with that important face! Well, but come! what don't you comprehend?

Love. There is something in this treatment that I don't so well——

Mrs Love. Oh! are you there, sir! How quickly they, who have no sensibility for the peace and happiness of others, can feel for themselves, Mr Lovemore!—But that's a grave reflection, and I hate reflection.

Love. What has she got into her head? This sudden change, Mrs Lovemore, let me tell you—

Mrs Love. Nay, don't be frightened: there is no harm in innocent mirth, I hope: never look so grave upon it. I assure you, sir, that though, on your part, you seem determined to offer constant indignities to your wife, and though the laws of retaliation would in some sort exculpate her, if, when provoked to the utmost, exasperated beyond all enduring, she should, in her turn, make him know what it is to receive an injury in the tenderest point——

Love. Madam! [*Angrily.*

Mrs Love. Well, well, don't be alarmed. I sha'n't retaliate; my own honour will secure you there; you may depend upon it.—Will you come and play a game of cards? Well, do as you like; you won't come? No, no, I see you won't—What say you to a bit of supper with us?—Nor that neither?—Follow your inclinations; it is not material what a body eats, you know; the company expects me; adieu, Mr Lovemore, yours, yours.

[*Exit singing.*

Love. This is a frolic I never saw her in before!—Laugh all the rest of my life!—laws of retaliation!—an injury in the tenderest point!—the company expects me,—adieu! yours, yours!—[*Mimicking her.*] What the devil is all this? Some of her female friends have been tampering with her. So, so; I must begin to look a little sharp after madam. I'll go this moment into the card-room, and watch whom she whispers with, whom she ogles with, and every circumstance that can lead to— [*Going.*

Enter MUSLIN *in a hurry.*

Mus. Madam, madam,—here's your letter; I would not for all the world that my master——

Love. What, is she mad too? What's the matter, woman?

Mus. Nothing, sir,—nothing; I wanted a word with my lady, that's all, sir.

Love. You would not for the world that your master—What was you going to say?—what paper's that?

Mus. Paper, sir!

Love. Paper, sir! Let me see it.

Mus. Lord, sir! how can you ask a body for such a thing? It's a letter to me, sir, a letter from the country; a letter from my sister, sir. She bids me to buy her a *shiver de frize* cap, and a sixteenth in the lottery; and tells me of a number she dreamt of, that's all, sir: I'll put it up.

Love. Let me look at it. Give it me this moment. [*Reads.*] To Mrs Lovemore!—Brilliant Fashion. This is a letter from the country, is it?

Mus. That, sir—that is—no, sir,—no;—that's not sister's letter.—If you will give me that back, sir, I'll shew you the right one.

Love. Where did you get this?

Mus. Sir!

Love. Where did you get it?—Tell me truth.

Mus. Dear heart, you fright a body so—in the parlour, sir—I found it there.

Love. Very well!—leave the room.

Mus. The devil fetch it, I was never so out in my politics in all my days. [*Exit.*

Love. A pretty epistle truly! [*Reads.*] "When you command me, my dearest Mrs Lovemore, never to touch again upon the subject of love, you command an impossibility. You excite the flame, and forbid it to burn. Permit me once more to throw myself on my knees, and implore your compassion."——Compassion, with a vengeance on him!——"Think you see me now with tender, melting, supplicating eyes, languishing at your feet."—Very well, sir——"Can you find it in your heart to persist in cruelty?—Grant me but access to you once more, and, in addition to what I already said this morning, I will urge such motives"—Urge motives, will ye?—"as will convince you, that you should no longer hesitate in gratitude, to reward him, who here makes a vow of eternal constancy and love.

BRILLIANT FASHION."

So! so! so! your very humble servant, Sir Brilliant Fashion!——This is your friendship for me, is it?—You are mighty kind indeed, sir,—but I thank you as much as if you had really done me the favour: and, Mrs Lovemore, I'm your humble servant too. She intends to laugh all the rest of her life! This letter will change her note. Yonder she comes along the gallery, and Sir Brilliant in full chase of her. They come this way. Could I but detect them both now! I'll step aside, and who knows but the devil may tempt them to their undoing. A polite husband I am: there's the coast clear for you, madam. [*Exit.*

Enter Mrs LOVEMORE *and Sir* BRILLIANT.

Mrs Love. I have already told you my mind, Sir Brilliant. Your civility is odious; your compliments fulsome; and your solicitations insulting.——I must make use of harsh language, sir: you provoke it.

Sir Bril. Not retiring to solitude and discontent again, I hope, madam! Have a care, my dear Mrs Lovemore, of a relapse.

Mrs Love. No danger, sir: don't be too solicitous about me. Why leave the company? Let me entreat you to return, sir.

Sir Bril. By Heaven, there is more rapture in being one moment *vis-a-vis* with you, than in the company of a whole drawing-room of beauties. Round you are melting pleasures, tender transports, youthful loves, and blooming graces, all unfelt, neglected, and despised, by a tasteless, cold, unimpassioned husband, while they might be all so much better employed to the purposes of ecstacy and bliss.

Mrs Love. I am amazed, sir, at this liberty.—What action of my life has authorised this assurance?——I desire, sir, you will desist. Were I not afraid of the ill consequences that might follow, I should not hesitate a moment to acquaint Mr Lovemore with your whole behaviour.

Sir Bril. She won't tell her husband!——A charming creature, and blessings on her for so convenient a hint. She yields, by all my hopes!—What shall I say to overwhelm her senses in a flood of nonsense? [*Aside.*

Go, my heart's envoys, tender sighs make haste,—
Still drink delicious poisons from the eye,—
Raptures and paradise
Pant on thy lip, and to thy heart be press'd.
[*Forcing her all this time.*

Enter Mr LOVEMORE.

Love. Hell and distraction! this is too much.

Sir Bril. What the devil's the matter now? [*Kneels down to buckle his shoe.*] This confounded buckle is always plaguing me. Lovemore! I rejoice to see thee. [*Looking at each other*

Love. And have you the confidence to look me in the face?

Sir Bril. I was telling your lady, here, of the most whimsical adventure——

Love. Don't add the meanness of falsehood to the black attempt of invading the happiness of your friend. I did imagine, sir, from the long intercourse that has subsisted between us, that you might have had delicacy enough, feeling enough, honour enough, sir, not to meditate an injury like this.

Sir Bril. Ay, it's all over, I am detected. [*Aside.*] Mr Lovemore, I feel that I have been wrong, and will not attempt a vindication of myself. We have been friends hitherto, and if begging your pardon for this rashness will any ways atone——

Love. No, sir, nothing can atone. The provocation you have given me would justify my draw-

ing upon you this instant, did not that lady, and this roof, protect you.

Sir Bril. Harsh language to a friend——

Love. Friend, Sir Brilliant!

Sir Bril. If you will but hear me——

Love. Sir, I insist; I won't hear a word.

Sir Bril. I declare upon my honour——

Love. Honour! for shame, Sir Brilliant: honour and friendship are sacred words, and you profane them both.

Sir Bril. If imploring forgiveness of that lady—

Love. That lady!——I desire you will never speak to that lady.

Sir Bril. Can you command a moment's patience?

Love. Sir, I am out of all patience: this must be settled between us: I have done for the present.

Enter Sir BASHFUL.

Sir Bash. Did not I hear loud words among you? I certainly did. What are you quarrelling about?

Love. Read that, Sir Bashful. [*Gives him Sir* BRILLIANT'S *letter.*] Read that, and judge if I have not cause—[*Sir* BASHFUL *reads to himself.*

Sir Bril. Hear but what I have to say—

Love. No, sir, no; we shall find a fitter time. As for you, madam, I am satisfied with your conduct. I was indeed a little alarmed, but I have been a witness of your behaviour, and I am above harbouring low suspicions.

Sir Bash. Upon my word, Mr Lovemore, this is carrying the jest too far.

Love. It is the basest action a gentleman can be guilty of; and to a person who never injured him, still more criminal.

Sir Bash. Why so I think. Sir Brilliant, [*To him aside.*] here, take this letter, and read it to him, his own letter to my wife.

Sir Bril. Let me see it. [*Takes the letter.*

Sir Bash. 'Tis indeed, as you say, the vilest action a gentleman can be guilty of.

Love. An unparalleled breach of friendship.

Sir Bril. Not altogether so unparalleled: I believe it will not be found without a precedent—as, for example— [*Reads.*

"To my Lady Constant—

"Why should I conceal, my dear madam, that your charms have awaken'd my tenderest passion?"—

Love. Confusion!—my letter— [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. [*Reading.*] "I long have loved you, long adored. Could I but flatter myself"—

[LOVEMORE *walks about uneasy; Sir* BRILLIANT *follows him.*

Sir Bash. There, Mr Lovemore, the basest treachery!

Sir Bril. [*Reads.*] "Could I but flatter myself with the least kind return"—

Love. Confusion! let me seize the letter out of his hand. [*Snatches it from him.*

Sir Bash. An unparalleled breach of friendship, Mr Lovemore.

Love. All a forgery, sir; all a forgery.

Sir Bash. That I deny; it is the very identical letter my lady threw away with such indignation. She tore it in two, and I have pieced it together.

Love. A mere contrivance to varnish his guilt.

Sir Bril. Ha, ha! my dear Lovemore, we know one another. Have not you been at the same work with the Widow Bellmour?—If I spoke to her, it was to serve you, sir.

Sir Bash. Are you sure of that?

Love. Po! I won't stay a moment longer among ye.—I'll go into another room to avoid ye all. I know little or nothing of the Widow Bellmour, sir. [*Opens the door.*

Enter Mrs BELLMOUR.

Hell and destruction!——what fiend is conjured up here?—Zoons! let me make my escape out of the house. [*Runs to the opposite door.*

Mrs Love. I'll secure this pass: you must not go, my dear.

Love. 'Sdeath, madam, give me way!

Mrs Love. Nay, don't be in such a hurry: I want to introduce an acquaintance of mine to you.

Love. I desire, madam———

Mrs Bell. My lord, my Lord Etheridge; I am heartily glad to see your lordship! [*Taking hold of him.*

Mrs Love. Do, my dear, let me introduce this lady to you. [*Turning him to her.*

Love. Here's the devil and all to do! [*Aside.*

Mrs Bell. My lord, this is the most fortunate encounter.

Love. I wish I was fifty miles off. [*Aside.*

Mrs Love. Mrs Bellmour, give me leave to introduce Mr Lovemore to you. [*Turning him to her.*

Mrs Bell. No, my dear ma'am, let me introduce Lord Etheridge to you. [*Pulling him.*] My lord—

Sir Bril. In the name of wonder, what is all this?

Sir Bash. This is another of his intrigues blown up.

Mrs Love. My dear madam, you are mistaken: this is my husband.

Mrs Bell. Pardon me, ma'am, 'tis my Lord Etheridge.

Mrs Love. My dear, how can you be so ill-bred in your own house?—Mrs Bellmour,—this is Mr Lovemore.

Love. Are you going to toss me in a blanket, madam?—call up the rest of your people, if you are.

Mrs Bell. Pshaw! pr'ythee now, my lord, leave off your humours.—Mrs Lovemore, this is my Lord Etheridge, a lover of mine, who has made proposals of marriage to me.

Love. Confusion! let me get rid of these two furies. [*Breaks away from them.*

Sir Bash. He has been tampering with her too, has he?

Mrs Bell. [*Follows him.*] My lord! I say! my Lord Etheridge! won't your lordship know me?

Love. This is the most damnable accident! [*Aside.*

Mrs Bell. I hope your lordship has not forgot your appointment at my house this evening.

Love. I deserve all this. [*Aside.*

Mrs Bell. Pray, my lord, what have I done, that you treat me with this coldness? Come, come, you shall have a wife: I will take compassion on you.

Love. Damnation! I cann't stand it. [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. Murder will out: murder will out.

Mrs Bell. Come, cheer up, my lord: what the deuce, your dress is altered! what's become of the star and ribband? And so the gay, the florid, the *magnifique* Lord Etheridge dwindles down into plain Mr Lovemore, the married man!—Mr Lovemore, your most obedient, very humble servant, sir.

Love. I cann't bear to feel myself in so ridiculous a circumstance. [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. He has been passing himself for a lord, has he?

Mrs Bell. I beg my compliments to your friend Mrs Loveit; I am much obliged to you both for your very honourable designs. [*Curtseying to him.*

Love. I was never so ashamed in all my life!

Sir Bril. So, so, so, all his pains were to hide the star from me. This discovery is a perfect cordial to my dejected spirits.

Mrs Bell. Mrs Lovemore, I cannot sufficiently acknowledge the providence that directed you to pay me a visit, though I was wholly unknown to you; and I shall henceforth consider you as my deliverer.

Love. So! it was she that fainted away in the closet, and be damn'd to her jealousy. [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. By all that's whimsical, an odd sort of an adventure this! My lord, [*Advances to him.*] my lord, my Lord Etheridge, as the man says in the play, "Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark."

Love. Now he comes upon me.—Oh! I'm in a fine situation. [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. My lord, I hope that ugly pain in your lordship's side is abated.

Love. Absurd and ridiculous! [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. There is nothing forming there, I hope, my lord.

Love. I shall come to an explanation with you, sir.

Sir Bril. The tennis-ball from Lord Racket's unlucky left-hand.

Love. No more at present, Sir Brilliant, I leave you now to yourselves, and—[*Goes to the door in the back scene.*]—'Sdeath, another fiend! I am beset by them.

Enter Lady CONSTANT.

No way to escape?—[*Attempts both stage doors, and is prevented.*]

Lady Cons. Mr Lovemore, it is the luckiest thing in the world that you are come home.

Love. Ay, it is all over—all must come to light.

Lady Cons. I have lost every rubber; quite broke; four by honours against me every time. Do, Mr Lovemore, lend me another hundred.

Love. I would give a hundred pounds you were all in Lapland. [*Aside.*

Lady Cons. Mrs Lovemore, let me tell you, you are married to the falsest man; he has deceived me strangely.

Mrs Love. I begin to feel for him, and to pity his uneasiness.

Mrs Bell. Never talk of pity; let him be probed to the quick.

Sir Bash. The case is pretty plain, I think, now, Sir Brilliant.

Sir Bril. Pretty plain, upon my soul!—Ha! ha!

Love. I'll turn the tables upon Sir Bashful, for all this—[*Takes Sir* BASHFUL'S *letter out of his pocket.*]—Where is the mighty harm now in this letter?

Sir Bash. Where's the harm?

Love. [*Reads.*] "I cannot, my dearest life, any longer behold"——

Sir Bash. Shame and confusion! I am undone. [*Aside.*

Love. Hear this, Sir Bashful—"The manifold vexations, of which, through a false prejudice, I am myself the occasion"—

Lady Cons. What is all this?

Sir Bash. I am a lost man. [*Aside.*

Love. Mind, Sir Bashful—"I am therefore resolved, after many conflicts with myself, to throw off the mask, and frankly own a passion, which the fear of falling into ridicule has, in appearance, suppressed."

Sir Bash. 'Sdeath! I'll hear no more of it. [*Snatches at the letter.*

Love. No, sir; I resign it here, where it was directed; and with it, these notes, which Sir Bashful gave me for your use.

Lady Cons. It is his hand, sure enough.

Love. Yes, madam, and those are his sentiments, which he explained to me more at large.

Lady Cons. [*Reads.*] "Accept the presents which I myself have sent you; money, attendance, equipage, and every thing else you shall command; and, in return, I shall only entreat you to conceal from the world that you have raised a flame in this heart, which will ever show me, "Your admirer,

"And truly affectionate husband,

"BASHFUL CONSTANT."

All. Ha! ha!——

Sir Bril. So, so, so! he has been in love with his wife all this time, has he? Sir Bashful, will you go and see the new comedy with me?

Sir Bash. I shall blush through the world all the rest of my life. [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. Lovemore, don't you think it a base thing to invade the happiness of a friend? or to do him a clandestine wrong? or to injure him with the woman he loves?

Love. To cut the matter short with you, sir, we have been traitors to each other; a couple of unprincipled, unreflecting profligates.

Sir Bril. Profligates?

Love. Ay! both! we are pretty fellows indeed!

Mrs Bell. I am glad to find you are awakened to a sense of your error.

Love. I am, madam, and am frank enough to own it. I am above attempting to disguise my feelings, when I am conscious they are on the side of truth and honour. With the sincerest remorse I ask your pardon.—I should ask pardon of my Lady Constant too, but the fact is, Sir Bashful threw the whole affair in my way; and, when a husband will be ashamed of loving a valuable woman, he must not be surprised if other people take her case into consideration, and love her for him.

Sir Bril. Why, faith, that does in some sort make his apology.

Sir Bash. Sir Bashful! Sir Bashful! thou art ruined. [*Aside.*

Mrs Bell. Well, sir, upon certain terms, I don't know but I may sign and seal your pardon.

Love. Terms!—what terms?

Mrs Bell. That you make due expiation of your guilt to that lady.

[*Pointing to Mrs* LOVEMORE.

Love. That lady, ma'am!—That lady has no reason to complain.

Mrs Love. No reason to complain, Mr Lovemore?

Love. No, madam, none; for whatever may have been my imprudences, they have had their source in your conduct.

Mrs Love. In my conduct, sir?

Love. In your conduct:—I here declare before this company, and I am above misrepresenting the matter; I here declare, that no man in England could be better inclined to domestic happiness, if you, madam, on your part, had been willing to make home agreeable.

Mrs Love. There, I confess, he touches me. [*Aside.*

Love. You could take pains enough before marriage; you could put forth all your charms; practise all your arts, and make your features please by rule; for ever changing; running an eternal round of variety; and all this to win my affections: but when you had won them, you did not think them worth your keeping; never dressed, pensive, silent, melancholy; and the only entertainment in my house was the dear pleasure of a dull conjugal *tête-à-tête;* and all this insipidity, because you think the sole merit of a wife consists in her virtue: a fine way of amusing a husband, truly!

Sir Bril. Upon my soul, and so it is—— [*Laughing.*

Mrs Love. Sir, I must own there is too much truth in what you say. This lady has opened my eyes, and convinced me there was a mistake in my former conduct.

Love. Come, come, you need say no more. I forgive you; I forgive.

Mrs Love. Forgive! I like that air of confidence, when you know that, on my side, it is, at worst, an error in judgment; whereas, on yours——

Mrs Bell. Po! po! never stand disputing: you know each other's faults and virtues: you have nothing to do but to mend the former, and enjoy the latter. There, there, kiss and friends. There, Mrs Lovemore, take your reclaimed libertine to your arms.

Love. 'Tis in your power, madam, to make a reclaimed libertine of me indeed.

Mrs Love. From this moment it shall be our mutual study to please each other.

Love. A match, with all my heart. I shall hereafter be ashamed only of my follies, but never ashamed of owning that I sincerely love you.

Sir Bash. Sha'n't you be ashamed?

Love. Never, sir.

Sir Bash. And will you keep me in countenance?

Love. I will.

Sir Bash. Give me your hand. I now forgive you all. My Lady Constant, I own the letter, I own the sentiments of it; [*Embraces her.*] and from this moment I take you to my heart.—Lovemore, zookers! you have made a man of me. Sir Brilliant, come; produce the buckles.

Lady Cons. If you hold in this humour, Sir Bashful, our quarrels are at an end.

Sir Bril. And now, I suppose, I must make restitution here—

[*Gives Lady* CONSTANT *the buckles.*

Sir Bash. Ay, ay, make restitution. Lovemore! this is the consequence of his having some tolerable phrase, and a person, Mr Lovemore, ha! ha!—

Sir Bril. Why, I own the laugh is against me. With all my heart; I am glad to see my friends happy at last. Lovemore, may I presume to hope for pardon at that lady's hands?

[*Points to Mrs* LOVEMORE.

Love. My dear confederate in vice, your pardon is granted. Two sad libertines we have been. But come, give us your hand: we have used each other scurvily: for the future we will endeavour to atone for the errors of our past misconduct.

Sir Bril. Agreed; we will henceforward behave like men, who have not forgot the obligations of truth and honour.

Love. And now I congratulate the whole company, that this business has had so happy a tendency to convince each of us of our folly.

Mrs Bell. Pray, sir, don't draw me into a share of your folly.

Love. Come, come, my dear ma'am, you are not without your share of it. This will teach you, for the future, to be content with one lover at a time, without listening to a fellow you know nothing of, because he assumes a title, and spreads a fair report of himself

Mrs Bell. The reproof is just, I grant it.

Love. Come, let us join the company cheerfully, keep our own secrets, and not make ourselves the town-talk.

Sir Bash. Ay, ay; let us keep the secret.

Love. What, returning to your fears again? you will put me out of countenance, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. I have done.

Love. When your conduct is fair and upright, never be afraid of ridicule. Real honour and generous affection may bid defiance to all the small wits in the kingdom. In my opinion, were the business of this day to go abroad into the world, it might prove a very useful lesson: the men would see how their passions may carry them into the danger of wounding the bosom of a friend: and the ladies would learn, that, after the marriage rites are performed, they ought not to suffer their powers of pleasing to languish away, but should still remember to sacrifice to the graces.

To win a man when all your pains succeed,
The WAY TO KEEP HIM is a task indeed.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

SONG FOR MRS CIBBER,

IN THE WAY TO KEEP HIM.

Written at the Revival of the Play, by Mr Garrick.

YE fair married dames, who so often deplore,
That a lover once blest, is a lover no more,
Attend to my counsel, nor blush to be taught,
That prudence must cherish what beauty has caught.

The bloom of your cheek, and the glance of your eye,
Your roses and lilies, may make the men sigh;
But roses, and lilies, and sighs pass away,
And passion will die, as your beauties decay.

Use the man that you wed like your fav'rite guittar,
Though music in both, they are both apt to jar;
How tuneful and soft from a delicate touch,
Not handled too roughly, nor play'd on too much.

The sparrow and linnet will feed from your hand,
Grow tame by your kindness, and come at command:
Exert with your husband the same happy skill,
For hearts, like young birds, may be tamed to your will.

Be gay and good-humour'd, complying and kind,
Turn the chief of your care from your face to your mind;
'Tis there that a wife may her conquests improve,
And Hymen shall rivet the fetters of love.

FALSTAFF'S WEDDING.

WRITTEN IN IMITATION OF SHAKESPEARE.

BY

W. KENRICK, LL.D

PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MR DODD, IN THE CHARACTER OF MERCURY.

[Mercury descends from the clouds, flying across the stage: re-enters, followed by a servant, carrying a counsellor's gown and wig.]

A LA MERCURE, equipp'd from top to toe,
My godship's name and quality you know.
Commission'd from Apollo, I come down
T' attend this bench of justices, the town;
Assembled here, all members of the quorum:
To lay a matter of complaint before 'em.
The errand's not in character, 'tis true;
But what our betters bid us, we must do.
Therefore, t' appear with decency at session,
I've stole, you see, the garb of the profession.
This gown and band belong to serjeant Prig—
And this—our brother Puzzle's learned wig.—
[*Putting on the gown, &c.*
Dress makes the man, sirs, *vestis virum facit*—
So—now to business—Hem!—*si vestris placet*—
May't please your worships——Forgery, which is grown
To such a height as ne'er before was known—
I say, a forgery hath been committed,
By which king Pluto's myrmidons, outwitted,
Certain choice spirits, in theatric shape,
Have suffer'd from Elysium to escape;
Of Shakespeare's offspring an ideal train,
Sprung, Pallas-like, from an immortal brain!
Their names—I have 'em down—but, to be brief,
Shall only just enumerate the chief.
Imprimis, with Madeira swell'd, and sack,
There's Sir John Falstaff, alias call'd Plump Jack;
Next, Captain Pistol, a notorious bully;
And Miss Doll Tearsheet, famed for jilting cully;
The widow Quickly, vintner, bawd and whore,
With Bardolph, Peto, Nym, and—several more;
Link'd in a gang, each cut-purse with his crony,
All arrant thieves and *Dramatis Personæ;*
Bent, as supposed, to prostitute to shame
Th' aforesaid Shakespeare's honour, name, and fame.
I shall not trespass on your worship's time,
T' explain at full the nature of this crime:
But, poets having an exclusive right
To bring their mental progeny to light,
This right's invaded by the party 'peach'd;
Who, *vi et armis*, hath th' old bard o'er-reach'd;
By counterfeiting of his hand, do you see,
Feloniously to set these vagrants free;
With base design t' adopt them for his own,
Though Shakespeare's property, and his alone.
Such is the fact.——A critic were an ass,
No doubt, to let such imposition pass;
Nor could a cheat so palpable succeed,
But that the captain of the guard couldn't read—
Not he, for laughing, though to 've saved his soul;
The scene and circumstances were so droll.
Pistol, with yellow nightcap patch'd with red,
With mother Quickly was retired to bed;
And, waking, swore, by Styx, he would not come,
Sans preparation, pike and beat of drum.
Of *aqua-vitæ* having stole a flaggon,
Bardolph and Nym were playing at snap-dragon;
Sometimes proceeding from hard words to blows,
As by mistake Nym seiz'd on Bardolph's nose.
With Falstaff sat Doll Tearsheet, cheek by joll,
And while she buss'd his chin and scratch'd his poll,

Slipp'd from his thumb his grandsire's copper ring,
For love, not for the value of the thing:
Then stole his empty purse; but no abuse;
'Twas only done to keep her hand in use:
He swearing, he'd be damn'd as soon as trust his
Round belly more with Hal, or his chief-justice.
But this is wandering from the point.—They're here,
And on your summons ready to appear;
Please to proceed then to examination;
And be attentive to their information.
If, as your judgment cannot be erroneous,
You take this forgery to be felonious,
The author meaning fraud, I need not mention
Your issuing warrants for his apprehension;
And when you've caught and into pieces tore him,
Hang up his mangled carcase *in terrorem;*
In flagrant crimes the process should be short;
The law is clear——I leave it with the court.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Sir JOHN FALSTAFF.
Justice SHALLOW.
Master SLENDER.
Mr PLEADWELL.
Dr CAIUS.
Friar LAWRENCE.
Ancient PISTOL
BARDOLPH.
Corporal NYM.
GADSHILL.
Officer.
FRANCIS.
PETO, *and Attendants.*

WOMEN.

DAME URSULA, *afterwards Lady Falstaff.*
BRIDGET, *her Chambermaid.*
Mrs QUICKLY.
DOLL TEARSHEET.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Street in Westminster, on the Day of the Coronation of King Henry the Fifth.*

Sir JOHN FALSTAFF *enters solus.*

WHAT a scurvy quarter is this? Not a bush or a blind Cupid in the neighbourhood! 'Sblood, my legs will fail me ere I reach a tavern. Phoo—Phoo—It is some comfort, however, I escaped with my life. The green-apron'd rascals, crowding after the procession, had well nigh made an end of me.

BARDOLPH *enters.*

Bar. O, Sir John, I'm glad I have found ye. I was in the fearfullest quandary for you in the world. I hope your honour has got no hurt.

Fal. Not its death's wound, I hope; though Hal, indeed, look'd somewhat cold upon me.

Bar. Cold, Sir John! I am a-fear'd we shall be in limbo shortly: for my lord chief justice——

Fal. Hold thy ill-omen'd croaking. If faithful services are thus requited, I will turn cordwainer; yea, cobler, and heel-piece old shoes, ere I have to do with blood royal again. Ingratitude! I hate it.

Bar. To be sure, Sir John, what you say is right; for, as the song says, ingratitude is worse than the sin of witchcraft. But I hope your honour got no personable harm in the mob: you were carried off the terrace, for all the world like a dunghill from Mill-bank by a spring-tide.

Fal. Bardolph, away with thy filthy comparisons; I am ill at ease, and more disposed to spleen than merriment. I pr'ythee look out, and see if there be a bawdy-house at hand.

Bar. What here, so near the court, Sir John?

Fal. Where better? 'Sblood, dost think there are no whores at court? Are there no dames of honour? Dost think Hal hath banish'd them too? Look out, look out.

Bar. I will, Sir John. [*Exit* BAR.

Fal. I would I were in East-cheap. Mine hostess hath a most excellent cordial; and I never

stood in more need of it than now. The gross indignity Hal hath put on me, sticks in my throat, and in the end, may go near to choak me. I shall never gulp it down: that's flat; unless, indeed, a full cup of sherris help to clear the way. And then, how I shall stomach it; how I shall digest it, Heaven knows! At present both my person and knighthood are in jeopardy; my lord chief justice, to whose care I am commended, holding me not altogether in good liking. But no matter—if I am to be provided for, what avails it who is my caterer? I could wish, nevertheless, old white wine stood higher in his lordship's favour; that I may not be stinted at table, or in my by-drinkings. I like not such splenetic temperaments; such phlegmatic constitutions; grey-beards, that never make allowances for the continual waste of radical moisture.—'Sblood, I am as foundered and as sore as a blind horse in a mill. Bardolph! where a plague art thou gotten to, caterwauling?

Mrs QUICKLY *and* DOLL TEARSHEET *enter.*

Quick. O, Sir John Falstaff!

Dol. O, sweet Sir John!

Fal. How! mine hostess, and my good vestal, Mrs Tearsheet! save ye, gentlewomen both! good-morrow!

Quick. Godild ye, Sir John—Well, I vow and protest an I didn't say he would take as civil notice of his old acquaintance: nay, tho'f he was created by my lord mayor of London.

Doll. What talk ye of lord mayors and fusty citizens, gossip Quickly? Sir John is a courtier, and to be sure we must gratulate him now as one of the greatest knights in the nation—O, sweet Sir John!——

Fal. Truce with your formalities, Mrs Dorothy. Pray, have you seen none of your followers by the way? Pistol, nor Peto?

Quick. No verily, Sir John, not one.—We have seen nothing of any of them to-day. They are all gone to the coronation, I warrant; and, indeed, we should have been there too, hadn't it been for that wicked villain, constable Fang, that, by a mistake of the beadle of our ward, would have carried us to Bridewell this morning.

Fal. How! mine hostess and my fair Dorothy to Bridewell, I can assure ye.

Quick. Even to Bridewell, I can assure ye.

Fal. But how! how dame Quickly to Bridewell? a decent church-going widow and a modest maiden, I should say single gentlewoman, to a house of correction! why, what——

Quick. So I said, Sir John. Nuthook, Nuthook, says I, do you know what you do, says I?—Have me to Bridewell, says I—I say to Bridewell, indeed! a ruptable housekeeper, that has paid scot and lot, and borne the burden of half the parish any time these twenty years?

Fal. That thou hast, hostess; of the male half, I'll be sworn for thee.

Quick. Beside, says I, do you know Sir John Falstaff! says I.—Touch a hair of Mrs Dorothy's head, says I, and Sir John will make you smart for it, says I, every bone in your skin, says I.

Fal. And what said the rascal to that?

Quick. Said, Sir John! he stood mumchance, and spoke never a living syllable, but set his vinegar-visaged catch-poles upon us; who fastened their claws into Mrs Tearsheet's best kirtle, and tore it into as many rents and tatters, as there were in the old tapestry hangings I pawn'd to fit your honour out for the last expedition.

Fal. Pshaw!

Doll. Yes indeed, Sir John, made a mere tatterdemallion of me. But we did so tongue the leather-ear'd vultures——

Fal. That they were glad to lose their gripe to get rid of you, I suppose.

Quick. Nay, Sir John, I was obliged to perduce an angel to convince them we were not the parties indicted.

Fal. Infidel rogues! would nothing less than the testimony of an angel convince them?

Quick. Ay, I knew how Sir John would take it.—O, how soundly will the knave constable be swinged for this! a jack-in-office rascal! we shall cure the blue-skinn'd runnion of his itch for whipping, I warrant ye.

BARDOLPH *re-enters.*

Bar. I have been looking all about, Sir John, but I cannot find one.

Quick. What is it Sir John wants, Mr Bardolph?

Bar. A bawdy-house, mistress.

Quick. O Jesu-Maria! Mrs Dorothy.

Fal. How, sirrah! what call'st thou a bawdy-house? I sent thee to look out for a house of civil entertainment, where I might repose myself after my fatigue? Why, what, you rogue, would you make of me?

Quick. Marry come up indeed; a bawdy-house truly? but as to a house of civil entertainment, Sir John, here is one hard by, where the knights and lords, and all the great gentlemen of the court, are entertained, both by night and by day, as civilly as at their own homes; and by gentlewomen as kind to them, I warrant ye, as their own ladies themselves.—A house of civil entertainment a bawdy-house? why I keep a house of civility myself, and I would have you to know, Mr Bardolph——

Bar. Nay, nay, 'tis all one: what Sir John pleases.

Quick. Yes, by my truly, and so I think it ought, for if Sir John recommends you to the king——

Doll. Nay, were I Sir John, I'm sure I would never promote such a clown as Bardolph at court.

Bar. Ah! Doll, Doll, I am afraid our promotion will be at the gallows. If Sir John has any interest with the hangman, he may get me preferr'd, perhaps, to the top of the ladder.

Doll. Why, how now, varlet?

Quick. Do you hear? do you hear, sweet Sir John?

Fal. Ay, hostess, Bardolph is somewhat blunt: but, as for the king——

Quick. Heavens bless him! a sweet young prince he was; and to be sure a gracious king he is. But what of him, Sir John?

Fal. Why, marry, hang him, hostess—treason must out as well as murder.

Quick. I am amazed, Sir John; why, how is this? what a goodness! when—whe——

Doll. How is this, good Bardolph?

Fal. Why, I will tell you how it is. That same ungrateful, sneaking, pitiful rascal we were speaking of is turn'd fanatic!

Quick. Fanatic! the king turn'd fanatic!

Fal. Ay, fanatic, presbyter, bishop, if you will. Let his crown be his mitre, I care not.

Doll. We don't take your meaning, Sir John.

Fal. You must know then, Doll, that after having, in pure love and affection, ridden post day and night fourscore and odd miles, to congratulate him on his accession, and condole with him on his father's death; instead of bidding me welcome to court, he preached me my own funeral sermon.

Quick. A funeral sermon!

Fal. Ay, hostess: for at the end of his discourse he ordered me to be buried alive, at ten miles distance from the court. And to make this unnatural interment the surer, he has appointed my lord chief justice his undertaker, to see to the disposal of my corpse.

Quick. Buried alive, quoth he! what, what is in all this?

Fal. In plain terms, dame Quickly, your gracious king hath banished me the presence; and, till he grows a graceless prince again, I am forbidden to approach his person within ten miles, on penalty of being hanged. Take ye me now?

Quick. O Jesu! is it possitable?

Doll. Ah, ha! is it so? sits the wind in that quarter?

Quick. Well, as I am an honest woman, who would have thought it? it is a world to see!

Doll. And so, Sir John is in disgrace; still plain Jack Falstaff, and one of us? ha, ha, ha! poor blown Jack!

Quick. A sad disappointment, indeed, Sir John! but in good faith, things fall out so odd, and the world goes so wrong, and the times are so hard, that here, there, why, no longer ago now than yesterday, was I obliged to pay the lord knows-what-all away for one thing or other; and then my misfortune to-day; an angel to the constables; and besides, this comes the day after to-morrow, when I must make up a sum for the wine-merchant; wherefore, if your honour would but discharge your score in Eastcheap; because as why, your honour knows——

Fal. How's this, dame Quickly?

Quick. Because I say as why, your honour knows, seventy odd pounds is a great deal of money for a poor widow woman to lose.

Fal. What talk you of losing, hostess!

Quick. True, Sir John, as you say, to be sure, I shall not be willing to lose it: for the law is open, and I know which way to get my money.

Fal. I am glad thou dost, hostess: as in that case I need not give myself the trouble to pay thee. The law is open, say'st thou? Ay, like a mouse-trap, on the catch for nibbling clients. Enter thy action, and I will hold thee a gallon of sack, thy departed husband will get out of purgatory ere thou out of the hands of thy lawyer.

Quick. Nay, Sir John, you need not twit me upon that. You need not fling my poor husband's soul in my teeth. He has not been gone so long; though for the matter of that he might have been in Heaven before now, hadn't I lent you the money, Mr Dumb should have had to say masses for him. Yes, Sir John, you have put into that great belly of your's what should have got my poor husband out of purgatory, and now you reproach me for it. Had he been still alive, you would not have used his disconsolate widow thus. You wouldn't, Sir John.

Fal. No, I'll be sworn, I should not.

Quick. Well then, Sir John, out of charity, if it were nothing else, you ought to repay the money.—Nay, if you don't, I'll pray night and day that you may be haunted by his ghost. Heaven rest his soul! I would he might never sleep quietly in his grave, till he has made you pay me.

Fal. Go to, thou art a foolish woman: with good words thou may'st be paid.

Quick. No, Sir John, good words won't do. I must have money, Sir John. The priests won't get a soul out of purgatory without money. Besides, Sir John, good words are no payment; I can get no body to take them; good words will not do with me.

Fal. Well, well, I say you may be paid——

Quick. May! Sir John, I must. You have thus shuffled off and on me a good while; but I must, I must be paid, I must———

Fal. Heigh! heigh! wilt thou raise the neighbourhood upon us? If thou art clamorous, I will have thee duck'd in the Thames for a bawd. What a-plague, art thou drunk? On the honour of my knighthood thou shalt be paid. Dost thou doubt mine honour?

Quick. Why, Sir John, to be sure, nobody would scruple to confide in your honour's honour: but then, you know, Sir John, (nobody better) what honour is.—It will buy neither coals nor candles; nor will my landlord take it for rent, nor the merchant for sack or sherry. But would you give me only half the money, and leave the rest to honour; so that a body might keep open house, Sir John; that would be doing something.

Fal. Nay, if thou wilt be advised, I will do more for thee.—Bardolph! forget not to go (when I send thee) to the cashier, with whom I left a thousand pound this morning, and tell him to satisfy Mrs Quickly forthwith.

Quick. A thousand pound!

Fal. The times are not so bad, hostess, (thanks to our friend Shallow) but we may have a merry bout in Eastcheap.—How says my Doll?

Doll. Nay, you know, sweet Jack, I was always at your pleasure there.

Quick. That I will say for her, and a sweeter-natured, better-hearted creature, never lay by the side of a true man.—But goodness heart! why do we tarry here, when Sir John complained of his being fatigued, and was looking for a house of civil entertainment? I will shew you the way incontinently, Sir John.

Fal. I thank thee, hostess; I am now somewhat recruited, and will endeavour to reach Eastcheap.—And yet a cup of sack by the way, I think, would not be amiss. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Tavern in Eastcheap.*

Enter PISTOL *and* NYM.

Pis. Hang Pistol up with line of hempen string,
Ere he in rabbit-hutch be close immured—
Seize the stiff cramp upon the fangs of justice.

Nym. Marry-trap, we shew'd his myrmidons a light pair of heels though.—I wonder what is become of Sir John.—They have certainly nailed his fat paunch.—We must not venture to the Fleet to see: they'll nab us there; and, for the matter of that, I suppose they'll be running the humour upon us here too. I will incontinently go and shut myself up.—The storm may blow over when we are found uninventible.

Pis. Pistol disdains to skulk. *Nolens* 'tis fate:
But who would *volens* be incarcerate?
Nym, we must eat, and money have we none.

Nym. True, *nolus volus*, as you say, we must eat. I like to starve, like a rat, behind the arras, as little as another man.—But what shall we do if Sir John be in limbo?

Pis. Or *in* or *out*; his follower I no more.
Invention's mother is Necessity,
And Pistol's demon is an imp of wit,
Merc'ry suggests, and Pallas doth approve.
The great Ponjardo del Stiletto's dead,
Professor of the art of self-defence.
His broken foils, his daggers, belts, and blades,
The stock in trade, I'll purchase upon tick;
My face, disguised with an usurped beard,
These jutting eye-brows, turn'd from black to red,
Shall screen from knowledge. Thou shalt too assume
A borrowed excrement, and partner be
In stock and block: since fighting's grown a trade,
Pence are pick'd up by masters of the blade.

Nym. The thought is lucky. Angels will ensue.—But must we not transmutify our names?

Pis. My brain's my god-father, and, at the font,
Me Don Anticho del Pistolo called.

Nym. And pray what did this same god-father call me?

Pis. Signior Nymwego.

Nym. Good! Signior Nymwego! and you Don Anticho del Pistolo called! I will hold them in oblivion.—The trick of it pleases.—But, here comes Quickly and Doll.

Enter Mrs QUICKLY *and* DOLL TEARSHEET.

Quick. So, gentlemen! you are got home before Sir John, I see.

Pis. How fares the knight? Is he in durance vile?

Quick. No, by my truly; he returns forthwith; but in a woeful plight.—Francis! What, Francis! bring the great chair for Sir John.

Fran. [*Within.*] Anon, anon, sir.

Doll. [*To* NYM.] Sirrah, Nym, hath Falstaff got money by him?

Nym. Yes, a thousand pounds; he borrowed it of Justice Shallow: but we shall be little the better for that; for the knight will certainly be in limbo.

Doll. May be *no;* and may be *yes.*—It is no matter. [DOLL *and* QUICKLY *confer apart.*

Nym. [*To* PISTOL, *who stands musing.*] Does the humour hold? Or shall we wait the coming of the knight?

Pis. And share his fate in base incarceration!
Shall Don Anticho del Pistolo prove
A vile hunt-counter? No—we'll thrive alone.
Hostess, farewell; we may return—or not.

Nym. Bye, Doll. [*Exeunt* PISTOL *and* NYM.

Quick. 'Tis certainly so; Sir John hath got the money.

Doll. I know not that; but if he has, he'll probably carry it to jail with him.—Here comes Bardolph; ask him.

Enter BARDOLPH.

Quick. Is Sir John at hand, Bardolph?

Bar. He will be here incontinently, hostess; I only stept before, to let you know he was a-coming.

Quick. But is it veritably true, Bardolph, that Sir John has got a thousand pounds by him?

Doll. Ay, is that true, Bardolph?

Bar. True, upon honour: he had it of Justice Shallow, of Gloucestershire; and it lies now in Master Jingle-cash, the banker's hands.—But Sir John will be here momentably.—Is every thing ready?

Quick. In a minute we are all clear. Run, good Doll, and receive the knight at the door.—Francis! what, Francis!

Fran. [*Without.*] Anon, anon, sir.

Quick. Light up candles in the passage. A bottle of sherris, Francis! quick, you sleeping knave. Always upon a snail's gallop! O, that ever woman should be plagued with such creeping varlets!

Doll. O, here is Sir John, himself.

Enter Sir JOHN FALSTAFF.

Quick. Jaded to death, I warrant!—An easy chair, good Bardolph. Please to depose yourself, Sir John.

Fal. Soh! now have I taken up my sitting again, in my old quarters.—A glass of sherris, Francis!

Doll. And how do you find yourself, my sweet knight?

Fal. Tolerable thirsty. [*Drinks.*] I can drink, and that is all the bodily functions I am capable of.—I am as stiff, every part about me, as a walking tailor, or Don Diego on a sign-post.

Doll. Nay, Sir John, if that be the case, it is not over with you yet.—Give me a buss.

Fal. Go, Doll, you are riggish—get you gone, you water-wag-tail, you; I am not merrily disposed.

Doll. But, will you give me a new kirtle at Bartholomew-fair?

Fal. I will, Doll.——Nay, I cannot bear you on my knee.

Doll. Why, how came you so terribly mauled, my leman?

Fal. Did I not tell ye?

Quick. No indeed, Sir John, your honour spoke of fatigue; but did not descend to particles.

Fal. Well then, I will tell ye now. Give me first a glass of sherris. [*Drinks.*] You must know that, after the king (hang him for a sheep-stealing cur!) gave me that rebuff I told you of, he stalk'd majestically away, and left me to the mercy of the multitude; when, as I stood parlying with mine ancient, mine arms a-kimbo thus; a knot of elbowing carls bore me down before them, with the impetuosity of a torrent. Lo! there was I, jamm'd fast in the midst of a vile group of mechanics, as if we had grown together in a body-corporate: and in this jeopardy was I carried along: sometimes bolstered up on all sides, at the confluence of several turnings, like a May-pole; and at others, wire-drawn between two stone walls, as if they meant to make chitterlings of me: now, this fair round belly taking the form of a Christmas-pye, and by and by press'd as flat as a pancake. It is a miracle I did not burst in the midst of them. Had it not been for the sufficiency of my buff doublet, I should have certainly burst.

Doll. If you had, Sir John, you would have went off with a report like a bladder.

Fal. A bladder, ye jade! a demi-culverin at least. I should have died a hero: my exit would have made some noise in the world.

Quick. Heaven forbid, Sir John, you should ever die a virulent death, I say.

Doll. I hope, indeed, sweet knight, you will never be pressed to death. That must be an odd end, and yet, methinks I could bear much.

Fal. I'll be sworn thou couldst, Doll: but thou art a woman, and made to bear.

Quick. Yes, in good sooth, poor woman is made to bear every thing. She must suffer all a man's ill-humours, let 'em lie never so heavy upon her; and, by my truly, some men are nothing else. But, to be sure, Sir John, you was most inhumanly used. Would nobody take pity upon you?

Fal. Pity! the most remorseless rascals! they made no more of me than if I had been a lump of dough they were kneading to make dumplings of: and to expostulate with the villains would have been preaching to the winds.

Doll. Why did not you exert your courage, Sir John? draw upon them?

Fal. Draw, say'st thou? I could not come at my rapier to be master of a kingdom. And as for good words, in return for the few I gave them, they let fly their jests so thick at me, and peppered me so plaguily with small wit, that I was dumfounded.

Doll. I thought you could never have been overmatched that way, Sir John.

Fal. Yet so it was, Doll. They were holiday-wits, and came laden with choke-pears; but, indeed, I was overpowered by numbers. Two to one, Doll, you know—They pelted me from all quarters.—Will you hear? I will give you a spice of their sarcasms; a sample of the jibing pellets they threw at me. As I was thus stemming the tide, and crying out for the Lord's sake, a dried eel's-skin of a fishmonger ask'd me how I could complain of the crowd? "Is a porpoise ill at ease," said he, "amidst a glut of sprats and herrings?" I had not time to answer the smelt, before a barber-surgeon, the very model of the skeleton in his glass-case, offered to tap me for the dropsy, and to make us all elbow-room by letting out a puncheon of canary at my girdle. "Right," cries a third, at the word canary, "I'll be hang'd if any thing be in the doublet of that fat rogue but a hog's-skin of Spanish wine;" and incontinently they roared out on all sides, "Tap him there, tap him, master surgeon." 'Sblood, I was forced to draw in my horns, and be silent, lest the villains, being thirsty, should force the shaver to operation. The knave, indeed, was five weavers off, and so could not well come at me; I might otherwise have been drank up alive.

Doll. And pray how cam'st thou off at last, Sir John?

Fal. By mere providence; for, after the barbarous rascals had squeez'd the breath out of my body, they buffeted me because I could not roar out 'God save the king.' At length, I know not how, they threw me down in the cloisters, where, falling cross-way, and the way being narrow, I fairly block'd up the passage; upon which, for they could not straddle over me, they took another way (a plague go with them) for fear of losing the show. And thus was I left to take in wind, and gather myself up at leisure.

Doll. And did the mangy villains so play upon thy sackbut? a parcel of sapless twigs! dry elms, fit only for fuel! I would I had the burning of them.

Fal. Would thou fire them, Doll? Ha! art thou touch-wood still, Doll?

Doll. Nay, Sir John, not so.

Quick. No, I'll be sworn, Sir John, to my carnal knowledge, if there be truth or faith in medicine.—But, Sir John, what would your honour please to have for supper?

Fal. Another glass of sherris—fill me out, Bar-

dolph. I cannot eat. I have lost my appetite by the way. Put an egg into a quart of mull'd sack, and give it me when I am a-bed. I will to sleep.

Doll. Would you have your bed prepared strait, Sir John?

Fal. Aye on the instant, good Doll. Hostess! go thou and see to the brewage of my sack.

[*Exeunt* DOLL *and Mrs* QUICKLY.

PISTOL *and* NYM *enter.*

Pis. Sir Knight, I bring thee news; loud fame reports my lord chief justice hath recalled his warrants.

Fal. I would he were choaked with his warrants ere he had issued them. But I thank thee for the tidings. The serjeants will not disturb my rest, at least, to-night But, what comes here?

Pis. From ducking-pond escaped in dripping plight,
The crooked-finger'd cut-purse, Peto hight.

PETO *enters leaning upon* GADSHILL.

Fal. What's the matter, Peto?

Gad. Matter! Sir Knight, and master of mine! —Matter, i' faith, enough. The mob at Westminster had like to have murdered poor Peto here.

Fal. And how so?

Gad. Why, Sir John, as he was getting upon a cobler's bulk, to see what was become of your honour, a raw-boned swaggering serjeant, coming by, whipt hold of him by the leg, and threw him on the people's heads; where they shouldered him about from post to pillar, as they would have done a hedge-hog, or a dead rabbit that had been thrown among them. I'faith, I thought they would have killed him.

Fal. How! was that Peto? I saw the bustle at a distance, but took it for a huge boar-cat the porters and 'prentices had got, to make sport withal. By the Lord, Peto, I have a fellow-feeling for thy sufferings.

Pis. And I. But say, is merit thus repaid?
Shall Fortune play the jilt with men of mould?
Go, Peto, lay thy head in Parco's lap.

Fal. Good Peto, let me advise thee to go to bed,
And lay thy head on a pillow. Bardolph, see to him.
Pistol and Nym, good night.

Pis. and Nym. Good night, Sir John.

Fal. Francis!
Light me to bed—let Doll bring up the sack,
See to the jorden, and tuck up my back.
[*Exit.*

Pis. Signior Nymwego! Hear'st thou, lad of craft?

Nym. Yea, marry, Don Anticho del Pistolo—runs the humour well?

Pis. Well, Nym; and thou and I, o'er cup and cann,
Will go and schemes of operation plan.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Street.*

Justice SHALLOW *and Master* SLENDER *enter.*

Slen. I wonder now, coz, when you know what a desperate kind of a horrible man Sir John is, you should———

Shal. Tut, tut—I fear him not; there's ne'er a Sir John Falstaff in the nation shall over-reach me.

Slen. But what's done cann't be helped, coz; he over-reached you now, as I take it, when you lent him the money.

Shal. Well, cousin of mine; then it is my turn now to over-reach him, and get it again.

Slen. That, indeed, cousin Shallow, to be sure, would be quite right; tit for tat, as we say in the country; but then he is such a bloody-minded caitiff; you know he broke my head once for nothing at all; and if he should get an inkling that you are going to law with him, O Lord, O Lord, I shall never sleep in quiet again.

Shal. Poh, you chit, if he breaks the peace, I shall know what to do with him, I warrant ye.

Slen. Ay, there indeed, cousin, ecod, I did not think of that. If I am in fear of my life, I can answer taking him up with a warrant, and binding him over to his good behaviour. Suppose, therefore, coz, we swear the peace against him first, and lay him fast by the heels before we enter the action. And yet I don't know, if I might advise ye, I would wash my hands of him.

Shal. Talk not to me. I tell thee I will spend half my estate, ere the rascally knight shall carry it off so. I had rather the inns of court should share the money among them, than that the gorbellied knave should feast his enormous guts at any free-cost of mine.—I will to counsel immediately; and if the law will not avail me, my sword shall do me justice.

Slen. You know best, cousin Shallow, to be sure; but———

Shal. But me no buts, I say, but come along!
Your Cousin Shallow puts up no such wrong.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Street.*

An Officer of the King's Household and a Friar enter.

Off. There, good friar, thou hast it: it would little conduce to raise the king's wisdom in the general estimation of the world, to have it thought in the power of such unworthy men as Falstaff and his fellows, to lead him implicitly into all those extravagancies under which the character of

his youth suffered: and yet so it would go near to be suspected, if his highness should now act towards them with an ill-timed severity. My lord chief-justice hath therefore retracted his hasty orders for their imprisonment.

Fri. Son, well observed; and I commend his lordship's prudence, in treating their vices as infirmities; and will readily undertake to commune with them on the grievous enormity of their dissolute lives.

Off. His lordship would have you apply first to Sir John Falstaff, the ringleader of this vicious troop.—If you can dispose him to good, the rest may follow.

Fri. I will attend these reprobates, and use the means.

Off. His lordship requires that you would bring Falstaff over to retire to a monastery, if possible; that, being concealed from the eyes of the world, he may not daily remind it of what is past. Farewell, good father, I will see thee again at the Priory. [*Exit.*

Fri. I will go; but I fear my mission will prove as fruitless as that of many other apostles, sent among infidels. As there is no danger of martyrdom, however, I am content. Persuade Sir John Falstaff to turn monk! Could I work miracles, indeed, and, like St Thomas, turn an Ethiop white, something might be said for it: but, as it is, I despair of converting an old debauchee from two such prevailing heresies as the whore and the bottle. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Tavern in Eastcheap.*

FALSTAFF *and* BARDOLPH *enter.*

Fal. Two sound naps, of eight hours a-piece, have something recruited me. Bardolph, my morning's whet. Is it prepared?

Bar. 'Tis here, Sir John. [*Gives* FALSTAFF *a tankard.*]

Fal. Here's to our better fortune. [*Drinks.*

Bar. Ah, Sir John, I am afear'd our fortune hath been at its highest flood. We have seen our best days.

Fal. So the world goes, Bardolph. Up and down! But is it not hard now? I that have—— but that's nothing. I hate boasting. It is, however, well known what pains I have taken to make a man of that Hal. Nay, you yourself are privy to the many good offices I have done him. Before the younker knew me, he could not drink sack; made conscience of going to church on holidays; and blushed like a scarlet cloak at entering a bawdy-house. I instructed him in all the manly exercises. I was content to win his money, to teach him gaming: to get drunk myself to try to make him so. Nay, setting rotten limbs and dignity aside, have I not even pimped for the bashful rogue? Such a Prince of Wales! by my troth, I was ashamed of him. Had it not been for me, the milksop might have been crowned before he had lost his maidenhead.

Bar. And that would have been a pity, Sir John, to be sure.

Fal. It was I first taught him to way-lay the true-man; for I knew him when he durst not cry *stand* to a turkey-cock; nay, a gander of the ordinary size of a green goose, had it met him on a common, would have made him run for it. I went farther yet; and not only emboldened his actions, but taught him the manly arts of conversation. In the style military, for instance, or swearing—

Bar. Sir John, I believe there you forget yourself; the prince wanted no assistance of you in that; for when he was a little crack, he would swear ye like a man six foot high.

Fal. Right, Bardolph, you are right. I remember me; swearing indeed he knew: for though but a king's son, he would, as thou sayst, rap out an oath like an emperor. But then for the quintessence of elocution, the hyperbole, vulgarly called lying; there I am a master. Yet what a deal of pains it hath cost me to teach Hal to lie; and all thrown away upon him. He would never do it roundly. He had no genius that way.

Bar. You know, Sir John, the prince never could away with lying. He used to say 'twas beneath a gentleman and a soldier.

Fal. Well, well, he will never shine in the recital of his own exploits, as Xenophon, Cæsar, and I have done.

Bar. Why, Sir John, to be sure, you have done something.

Fal. Something! the services I have done him and his father are out of number. Methinks my behaviour in the ever-memorable action of Shrewsbury should make him blush at his ingratitude. Who killed Hotspur? did not I give him his death's wound in the thigh? was it not I who took prisoner that fiery dragon Coleville? and that even alive! And am I thus requited? Is this the guerdon of my great atchievements? Hang valour, I'll hack my sword no more. Thus has it ever been the fate of merit to be rewarded. Alcibiades and Bellisarius for that!

Bar. Ay, Sir John, they were tall fellows: they were sadly used indeed: I have heard of them. But that was in king John's time, I think.

Fal. They were the Falstaffs of antiquity, Bardolph.

Bar. Like enough, Sir John; they were before my time, to be sure; though Pistol told me, t'other day, that General Bellisarius was his god-father.

Fal. Pistol is an ignorant braggard, an ass: I have injured my dignity by associating with rascals, not worthy to wait at my heels. What tell'st thou me of Pistol?

Bar. Nay, Sir John, I meant no harm. I do think you deserve to be made a lord of indeed.

Fal. I expected nothing less, I can assure ye. And then, for my well-known œconomy, to have had the sole management of the exchequer at least.

Bar. And instead of that, to be banished——

Fal. I knew not if I heard the word banish. I was forbidden indeed to come near the king's person by ten miles; but I was not at that distance when those injunctions were laid on me. Quere now (it might pose a casuist, let me tell ye) whe-

ther I am thereby enjoined to march right out ten miles an end; whether the negative *not come* amounts to the positive, *go.*——I will not understand it so; and, if that be my lord chief-justice's construction, by the Lord, I will put him to the trouble of carrying me: I will be laid up with the gout ere I budge a foot.

Bar. Indeed, Sir John, the king did say banish.

Fal. Admit it: unless he means to reside for ever in a place, and be in his own proper person as immoveable as a church, I hold my life on a damn'd precarious tenure. He must give me timely notice of his motions, that I may regulate mine accordingly;—otherwise, if he be travelling my way, we may happen to encounter, and I get myself hanged through inadvertency. I do not think it safe, therefore, to stir out of town, without more explicit orders. Give me another draught.

Bar. The tankard is out, Sir John. Shall I replenish?

Fal. No. I'll toward St Paul's: a gentle perambulation this morning may refresh me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*A Street.*

Justice SHALLOW, *Master* SLENDER, *and a Lawyer enter.*

Shal. Well, Master Pleadwell, are you still of that opinion? If so, my money's gone.

Law. Indeed, I am still of that opinion, Justice Shallow.

Shal. What! how! that my money's gone?

Law. Nay, I know not that. I say, I am of opinion you should have taken a bond, or obligation, at the time of lending it, friend Shallow. A thousand pounds on the bare word of a courtier, and that courtier Sir John Falstaff! ne'er an alderman in the city of London would have lent a thousand pence on such security.

Slen. Oh, that ever a country 'squire should have less wit than a city alderman!

Law. A thousand pounds, Mr Shallow, is——

Shal. A thousand pounds. I know it is, master Pleadwell, I know it well. But pray now, is there no method in the law to recover it? He cannot have spent it yet: cannot we compel him to restitution? Arrest him—arrest him, Mr Pleadwell.

Law. But should he deny the debt, how will you prove it? and who knows, on such an emergency, what Sir John Falstaff will not do?

Shal. Nay he will lie: that's the truth on't.

Slen. Ay, coz, and that most consumedly too.

Shal. I can prove his receipt of the money.

Law. But the conditions, Justice Shallow.—What have you to shew that he is engaged to return it? and when?

Shal. Nothing: I was weak enough to lend it him on his bare word.

Slen. Nay, cousin Shallow, not so neither. I'll be sworn he borrowed it upon his oath. He swore upon the honour of a true knight, to give him a thousand pounds again; and besides that, the comings-in of a better thing, in his majesty's court at London.

Law. Ah, Master Slender, these knights have just honour enough to swear by; but, for any thing further, I am apprehensive we shall find him one of these honourable knights, whose word is as good as their oath. But see, if I mistake not, yonder he comes; this encounter may perhaps save us the trouble of attending him at home. Let us speak him fair, and persuade him, if possible, to sign an obligation for the money. If we can do that, we may trounce him. Let me alone with him.

Slen. O, would you could, Mr Pleadwell! what would I give him methinks to see him well trounced! if it was only for giving me once a bloody coxcomb.

Sir JOHN FALSTAFF *enters.*

Fal. How, Master Shallow! consulting with his lawyer! are ye thereabouts, friend Shallow? would you hamper me with an action? [*Aside.*] I will pass them by. [*Going.*

Shal. Sir John, Sir John, a word with you, if you please.

Fal. O, my good friends, Robert Shallow, Esq. and Master Slender; how fare ye, gentlemen both?

Law. Sir John, Mr Shallow here has——

Fal. Ha! what, mine old acquaintance Master Wheedlepoint! how is it with your health, Master Wheedlepoint?

Law. Pleadwell is my name, Sir John.

Fal. Right.—I cry you mercy——Roundabout Pleadwell, I think. My memory is not so retentive as—

Law. No offence, Sir John, that is not the case.

Fal. Marry but it is, Mr Pleadwell; a treacherous memory is my great defect: and a misnomer in law thou knowest——

Law. Would be matter of consequence, Sir John. But that is not our business at present. Mr Shallow here hath put a case——

Fal. Ay, Master Shallow should know something of the law too. Was not he at Clement's Inn when thou wert first entered there? That must be many years ago, Mr Pleadwell.—Let me see, how many years ago must that be, Master Shallow?—Why you carry your age well, Mr Pleadwell.

Shal. Pretty well, pretty well, Sir John, but that—

Fal. Nay marry, I say, very well, Master Shallow. And pray what is become of young Puzzlecause, and Dick Silvertongue, your fellow-students there? they were called to the bar, I suppose. That Dick was a prate-a-pace rogue! and a devil among the bona robas. He and Master Shallow here were two with the wenches. Ha, Master Shallow?

Shal. No matter, Sir John, at present we would confer on other business.

Fal. Nay, gentlemen, if ye are on business, I crave your pardon, and leave ye. I am not used to be impertinent.

Law. You are not going, Sir John; it is with you our business lies.

Fal. Business with me!

Shal. Yes, about the thousand pounds, Sir John

Fal. What mean you, Master Shallow?

Shal. That you borrowed of me, Sir John.

Slen. Yes, Sir John, the thousand pounds you borrowed of my cousin Shallow, Sir John.

Fal. Take me with ye, gentlemen both; let me understand ye. You presented me, indeed, with a thousand pounds to promote your interest at court, Master Shallow; and may depend on it, if I can serve you——

Shal. Fiddle, faddle, Sir John, I expect my money again: your interest at court is not worth a farthing.

Fal. I cannot help that; the more is my misfortune, Mr Shallow; you see my heart is good.

Law. If so, Sir John, you will not refuse to give Mr Shallow something to shew for his money, under your hand?

Fal. How dost thou know that, Mr Pleadwell? I must consult my counsel in this case.

Law. There is no need, Sir John; I will draw up a little instrument, to which thou wilt set thy hand immediately.

Fal. Not while I have a head, Master Pleadwell; I like not running hand over head in these matters. By latter Lammas, or St Falstaff's day, I may perhaps bethink me.

Law. I know of no saint of thy family in the calendar, Sir John.

Fal. Well, well, there may be saints of a worse. Our merit hath not stood in the way of promotion; that's all: and yet there are as many whoremasters there as lawyers, I believe. But I cannot tarry now to hold farther question with thee; fatigued as I am, and earnest to reach my lodgings yonder.

Law. If thou wilt there sign the instrument, Sir John, we will attend you thither.

Fal. Wilt thou? It is a notorious bawdy-house.

Law. No matter, Sir John.

Fal. No matter sayst thou? Is it then no matter for one of the grave sages of the law to be seen in a public bawdy-house? Lord, Lord, what will this world come to! My conscience, however, is more tender: I should be sorry to give such occasion of scandal.

Law. Please you, Sir John, to be serious. Let us rightly understand each other.

Fal. With all my heart, good Master Pleadwell; then to be plain with you, I find you do not know me. You talk to me of restitution and condition; didst thou ever know Sir John Falstaff make restitution on any conditions? And dost thou think me so unpractised a courtier as to return the perquisites of my calling, because I am turn'd out; or to restore the purchase of my good-will, because I am not likely to get in? What, take ye me for a younker? a geck? Go to—you cannot play upon me.—Master Shallow, rest you content: your money is in good hands; and, if I do not spend it like a gentleman, never trust me with a thousand pounds again.

Shal. Oh! that I ever did trust a caitiff!

Law. But pray, were these the conditions, Mr Shallow? Was you to be repaid by a place at court?

Slen. To be sure. Why, what do you think, Mr Pleadwell, cousin Shallow was fool enough to lend a thousand pounds for nothing? Why, I myself was to be made a great man too; and that into the bargain.

Shal. Cousin Slender, speak in your turn, I pray you.

Law. Were these terms specified?

Fal. Not indeed on parchment, *signatum et sigillatum*, Mr Pleadwell. A courtier's promise is not, indeed, very good in law. But I can tell ye the places I should have procured for these 'squires; and, by'r lady, thou wilt say they would have been well occupied. Having a little pique or so at my lord-chief-justice, and Mr Shallow here thinking himself qualified, I promised him my interest for his worship's removal from the quorum to his lordship's place on the bench. Was it not so, Mr Shallow?

Shal. Don't belie me, Sir John; don't cheat me of my money, and laugh at me too. Robert Shallow, Esquire, will not put up with that.

Fal. Then Master Slender here, I proposed, for his address and elocution, to have got him appointed orator to the house of parliament; or otherwise, in consideration of his figure and magnanimity, to have made him a staff-officer, or captain of horse at the least.

Slen. Nay, Sir John, you did not tell me what; but I expected some notable place, I'll assure ye; for I look upon myself, plain 'squire as I stand here, to be somebody.

Shal. Coz, coz, you are an ass, coz.

Slen. Why, why, I didn't lend him the money; I.

Law. Justice Shallow, this is a very simple affair. I am sorry it is not in my power to serve you in it. Sir John, if you had either honour or honesty, you would restore the money; but, as you make pretensions to neither, I leave you.

[*Exit Law.*

Fal. Well, my masters, you hear the counsel learned in the law. Will you to dinner with me? you shall see I am no niggard. If you lodge with me in Eastcheap, you shall see the thousand pounds fairly spent in sack: you shall share with me to the utmost farthing. But for dry restitution, I have not been accustomed to it for many years. You would not have me a changeling at this time of day, I hope, Master Shallow.

Shal. Changeling! No, Sir John, thou art no changeling; but, depend on it, I will not put up this wrong. Robert Shallow, Esq. will neither eat nor drink with thee. If the law will not help me, I will take other methods. I will have my money; depend on't, I will have my money.

[*Exit* SHALLOW.

Slen. Ay, ay, we shall find means to get the money, never fear. [*Exit* SLENDER.

Fal. Nay, I fear it not—at least before I shall have found means to spend it; and then, get it who may, it concerns not me. We shall see, however, whose business will be done first. Mine will go merrily forward. Ah! shallow Master Shallow! But who could have thought the snipe

would have went to counsel to get himself laughed at? Then to see how demurely Sir Slyboots angled for me, as if I had been a gudgeon! How cunningly the rascally barrador would have hooked me on his instrument! But I was even with the methodical knave.—My friend Shallow will never bring it to bear an action at law; and if he should, I am on the right side of the hedge. Indeed, were I to go to law for a mint of money, I would choose to have it all in my possession. There is nothing like it. Possession is the very life's blood of a bad cause: on the strength of which is mine. I will home to dinner. [*Exit.*

SCENE V.—*A Fencing School.*

PISTOL *and* NYM *enter, disguised.*

Pis. Is this not better than the service mean
Of Cappadocian or Assyrian knight?
That last young quarreller, how much gave he?

Nym. Two marks for entrance and an angel fee.

Pis. 'Tis well, keep 'count; and lend attention mute.
Dame Ursula, the knight's neglected flame,
Grown rich, is fond of finery and name;
To her hath Don Pistolo made his suit
By love epistle.—Nym—What sayst thou to't?

Nym. What, rival Sir John! 'Tis true he does not go there now, or he'd make a bloody business of it. You must know I've courted her niece and chambermaid Bridget ever since the last wind-fall.

Pis. And hast thou sped?

Nym. Very scurvily, ancient. The jade runs her humours upon me.

Pis. Nym, I a letter for thee will indite,
In the true style of a Castilian knight.
Woman is taken by mere words and whim;
Nymwego shall command what's held from Nym.
But see new swaggerers coming——keep your state.

Justice SHALLOW *and Master* SLENDER *enter.*

Shal. Ay, this is my old school: here have I had my sa! and my ha!——Odso, your servant, gentles, pray is Signior Stiletto to be spoken with?

Pis. The valiant wight translated is to Heaven.

Shal. Faith and troth, I'm sorry for that; heartily sorry indeed.

Pis. Ha! sorry! sayst thou, Paphlagonian vile?
Wouldst thou in Tartarus that he should howl?
Ha!——Ha!

[*Draws, and makes a lunge at* SHALLOW, *who retires.*

Shal. Not I——not I.—Pray moderate your passion.——Gad's mercy on me, what a furious lunge!——Sir, understand me. Signior Stiletto was my honoured master; I had a friendship for him.

Pis. I then embrace thee with a soldier's arm.
Stiletto was the glory of the sword,
The Ajax, Hector, Agamemnon he!

Shal. And, if I may ask, without offence, pray, sir, what is the name and quality of your worship?

Pis. I his successor am, and men me call Anticho del Pistolo.

Shal. A name of sound, and smacking loud of valour; it sorts well with your figure and profession.

Slen. Ecod I think so; his name and looks I'm sure make me tremble. I would I were safely out of the house, la!

Pis. Needst thou my service?

Shal. To say the truth, sir, though I am not of a quarrelsome disposition, I have an affair of honour upon my hands; and, having long laid by my rapier, I came to take a lesson or two of Signior Stiletto, the better to withstand the force of my adversary. Now, since my old master is dead, I would be obliged to the skill of his successor.

Pis. What is thy name and quality?

Shal. My name is Shallow, sir.

Slen. Of Gloucestershire, Esq. justice of the peace, and of the quorum.

Pis. A name of note, and smacking much of folly. [*Aside.*
It suiteth well thy figure and thy purpose.
Nymwego, hand the foils. There, grasp it well;
Bear thy point thus against thy rival's sword,
And, had he twenty lives, he falls. Sa——Sa.

[*They skirmish, and* SHALLOW *is disarmed.*

Shal. Enough, enough, for once, brave sir, enough.
I see, indeed, you're worship is a master.
Another time I'll try my skill again.

Pis. Enough's a feast. Farewell, till next we meet. [*Exit* PISTOL.

Nym. And will not my young 'squire here enter into the humour of it. Come, sir, lay hold.

Slen. Cod so, not I. I quarrel with nobody but my man. And I can break his head at any time for sixpence. So I've no occassion, sir, I thank ye———Come, coz, let's go.

Shal. Sir, there's my thanks; [*Gives money to* NYM.] you'll see me soon again.

Slen. Yes, yes, my cousin will come again; but I've no occasion, I thank ye.

[*Exeunt* SHAL. *and* SLEN.

Nym. These two 'squires are precious subjects to play humours on.——I have it too: they've land and beeves; and, marry-trap, I will lay a trap for marrying them. Our hostess Quickly, and Doll Tearsheet, when bedizned, may pass on these Gloucestershire oafs for London dames of rank. Nay, they resemble the wealthy widow of Watling-street, and buxom Beatrice of Bucklersbury, her forward niece. This were a trick of price: I'll fashion it, by working up these noodles into a conceit of their being beloved by the widow, and Madam Beatrice. I will about it strait. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Tavern in Eastcheap.*

FALSTAFF *and* BARDOLPH *enter.*

Fal. Bardolph! how is it with Peto to-day?

Bar. Why, he's in a bad way, Sir John.

Fal. That all?——when was he otherwise? who ever knew Peto or thee in a good way?

Bar. And yet, Sir John, we are your followers, you know.

Fal. Well said, Bardolph.—I see thy wit is improved. I lead you the way, it is true; but you follow me, like spaniels, with damnable circumvolutions. But, whom have we here?

Bar. It is the doctor, Sir John, that has been up to see Peto.

Fal. O, doctor Caius Mithridate, the apothecary! a precious limb of Galen!—At Windsor he was a physician, and starved by prescribing poisons, but now he is turned apothecary, and thrives by administering them.

Dr CAIUS *enters.*

Fal. So, master doctor, thou art a man of merit I see.——Thou art sought after.——Pray how many patients may'st thou have dispatched to-day?

Caius. Pas beaucoup, Sir John——not great many. I pay visits betimes, en bon matin, à monsieur de Peto.—But I must go now a l'instant, à la cour.

Fal. Nay, rest you a moment, Dr Caius, I would commune with you a little on the score of old acquaintance. Pray, master doctor, how came you to leave Windsor? You were, I thought, in some repute there.

Caius. How came I to leave Windsor! by gar dat Windsor did leave me.——Repute! Morbleu, I was in de best reputation du monde. In dree year, dare vas no les dan dree hondred patients of quality under my hands.——They did never complain of mal-treatment; and yet I did stay dere till I had no patients left.

Fal. Dead men tell no tales, doctor, 'tis certain.

Caius. Eh, bien! my patients did die sure enough; but dere was deir sons, deir daughters, deir cousin-germans; dey was alive, and commended my treatment of de defunct, et non obstant they would never call me in demselves.

Fal. That's much.——But did all your patients die, say you? Not one survive to trumpet the fame of their doctor?

Caius. Yes, by gar, dere was one Bourgeois fort riche et fort mal, he bring me more disgrace than all dose dat vas dead. I did exert all my skill for two, dree years; and he would not be cured.

Fal. Then why did you not let him go after the rest?

Caius. By gar he would not go. Il a été fort enteté, cet homme là. I have given him opiates, de narcotiques, stronger, by gar, dan Lethe itself. But he would not be composed; he would live to disgrace me. So he turn me off; and grow well himself, bientôt, presently, without any medicine in the world.

Fal. A base plebeian tyke!

Caius. By gar he was one base fellow, let me tell you dat. De quality no put such affront upon practitioner renomme, un homme comme moi.

Fal. Right, master Caius; it is a damned thing when people will not die *secundum artem*, but live in spite of the doctor. But to the present concern; how is it with Peto?

Caius. Oh! j'espere qu'il seroit beintôt gueri; he is in very fair way, Sir John.

Fal. Bardolph tells me here, he is in a bad one; fair and good, I have heard often; but fair and bad, seldom. But what are his complaints, master doctor? I know something of physic.

Caius. Vy, Sir John, de cutis of de occiput et laceré: there be gros tumours all over de corps, de body. De patient has a delire, a vertigo; and besides, de symptomes febriles, de pouls indicat phlebotomy.

Fal. Phlebotomy! What, bleeding?

Caius. A leetel, Sir John—ve vill take avay but sixteen ounces, for un petit revulsion.

Fal. Sixteen ounces! Hast thou a design upon his life? What a plague, wouldst thou kill him? He doth not weigh four pounds averdupoize, flesh, bones, and all; and thou would'st take him away by quarterns, in a slop-bason.

Caius. Vat is dat, Sir John? vill you instruct me in patologie, de therapeutice, de indications et contra-indications? Monsieur Peto must be bled.

Fal. Bleed sick apes, and hypp'd monkies. If Peto be not hang'd, he shall die a natural death. Think'st thou I'll have his veins drain'd to fill a row of porringers in a barber's shop window! use bits of red cloth and be damn'd: ye shall have the blood of no follower of mine. Sixteen ounces! I tell thee, not Galen, Hippocrates, not Æsculapius himself, were they alive, should thus operate upon him. Phlebotomy! I will phlebotomize ye all with my rapier, by the Lord, if you offer to draw a lancet on him.

Caius. Eh bien donc, Sir John; be not in one passion; ve vill take little less; but by gar de patient vill die, if he no be bled. And let me tell you, Sir John, you vould do vell to lose little blood. En verité vous êtes trop plethorique.

Fal. Me! I thank thee. But, in the blood is the life of the creature; and I will not consent to part with mine.

Caius. Il seroit mieux aussi: It would be bet-

ter, Sir John, you mix little more vater in your wine.

Fal. More water! I mix none.

Caius. Vorse and vorse! By gar, Sir John, if you no shange your regime, you shall die. Your fat vill eat you up.

Fal. I shall eat up many a fat capon first, master doctor—But wouldst thou persuade me, with thy contra-indications, that water is better than wine?

Caius. Pour quelques temperamens et dans certains kas; for some constitutions and in some cases, Sir John.

Fal. For thine, perhaps, but mine thanks thee for thy water. Wine is good enough for me.

Caius. Ah! que vous êtes mal avisé. Eh bien, Sir John, you will no take my advise, I leave you. Bon jour—good day to you, Sir John. [*Aside.* Eh! mon Dieu! si gros! si gros, by gar, he cannot live long; he will overlay his own belly and burst, if he be not bled. [*Exit Dr* CAIUS.

Fal. Good day to you, master doctor apothecary. And yet I know not whether I ought to wish that neither; for a good day to him must be a bad one to some-body. A man of any conscience, or humanity, knows not how to salute fellows of such an occupation: for who would wish the rest of mankind lame and blind, sick, and sorry, to find them employment, forsooth? —Poor Peto! I would not lose him, methinks; for, though he be a worthless knave, he is an old acquaintance; and I never could find in my heart to part with my old acquaintance merely because they were good for nothing. King Hal is another sort of a man to what I am, to abandon his old friends in his prosperity thus.—Poor Peto!

Bar. Ecod, Sir John, it happen'd lucky for me, I can tell ye, that I came off so well as I did yesterday.

Fal. Ay, by'r lady, thou play'dst fair to get off in a whole skin, and leave thy friend and master in extremity.

Bar. Nay, 'pon honour, Sir John, I did my utmost to keep up with you: but 'twas unpossible; and indeed it was very fortunable that I was not myself trod to death by the populous.

Fal. Thou! tell me the moon is a Suffolk cheese, or a Windsor pear. Thou! have I not seen thee clear the ring without a staff, at a bear-baiting? Thou might'st make thy way through a legion, nay the millions of a crusade: why, who would come within a fathom of that fire-brand, thy nose? It is a flaming two-edged sword. Wouldst thou make me believe the villains would come near thee, to burn their holiday clothes? Thou wouldst have set them a blazing like stubble, and have consumed the whole procession of heralds, like men of straw. A plague upon them, it was by their avoiding thee, I suppose, that I had like to have died a martyr to corpulency.

Bar. Sir John, you're always plaguing me about my face; what would you have me to do with it?

Fal. Do with it! if there were water enough in the Thames, I would have thee quench it. But water, I fear, can do nothing for thee; since I remember, when we rode last from Canterbury, with the rain beating full in our faces, thou cam'st into the Borough with thy nose and cheeks glowing red hot, although they had been hissing all the way like a tailor's goose. God forgive me—but when thou runn'st behind the hedge, in fear of the officer, I could not help comparing him and thee to Moses and the burning bush. But thou wilt in time be consumed: thy fire must out.

Bar. I would it were out, so be I might hear no more on't. In troth, Sir John, if I must always be your butt, I shall seek another service I assure you.

Fal. Nay, nay, good Bardolph, that must not be. I speak not in disparagement, Heaven knows: for I mean to cherish thee against the lack of fuel, or the visitation of a Dutch winter.

Bar. 'Sblood, Sir John, I'll bear it no longer. [*Going.*

Fal. Hold, Bardolph, where art thou going? thou glow-worm in magnature, with thy tail upwards; thou pumpion-headed rascal, stay, or——

Bar. Give me good words then, Sir John; why pumpkin-head, pray now?

Fal. Hast thou never seen a scoop'd pumpion set over a candle's-end, on a gate-post, to frighten ale-wives from gossipping by owl-light? That is a type of thee——that is thy emblem: thy head being hollow, full of light, and easily broken; as thou shalt experience, if thou offer'st to fly thy colours till disbanded by authority. I shall need thee, I tell thee, to keep me warm under the coldness of the king's displeasure.

Bar. Indeed, Sir John, burnt sack and ginger will do you more good: for whatsomever light I may give, I am sure, set aside choler, I am as cold as e'er a white-liver'd younker in town.

Fal. Cold, say'st thou? thy face would condemn thee for an incendiary before any bench of judicature in the kingdom! thou wouldst carry apparent combustibles into court with thee. Tell me not of cold. Thou wouldst certainly have been hanged long ago, had not the sheriff been afraid thou wouldst have fired the hangman or the gibbet.

Bar. Why, Sir John, I have been your attendant, off and on, these twenty years, come Candlemas; and I don't find I have had any such effect on you.

Fal. The cause, you rogue, the cause; am not I obliged to keep a pipe of Canary constantly discharging on me? Are not the tapsters perpetually employed! the sack-buckets for ever a-going, to keep me from blazing? And yet at times my skin is shrivell'd up like an April pippin. Mark me but walking an hundred paces, with thee glowing at my heels, if I do not broil and drip like a roasting ox.

Bar. Ay, you are pleased to be hard upon me, Sir John, but I am sure my face never hurt a hair of your head.

Fal. No! look at 'em——hath it not turned them all grey? Twenty years ago, before they were bleached by thy fire, my locks were of a nut brown.

Bar. Why, you grow old, Sir John.

Fal. Old! what call you old? I am a little more than threescore: and Methusalem lived to near a thousand. Why may not I be a patriarch, and beget sons and daughters these hundred years, myself?

Bar. Then you must get a wife, Sir John, for your common fields, you know, never bear clover.

Fal. Marry! what, to be made a cuckold of, I warrant ye?

Bar. Why, Sir John, if you should marry, you would not like to be singular, I suppose?

Fal. Nay, for the matter of that, all's one: but who will have me? Your dames of breeding are too fine and finicking for me to bear with them.

Bar. Ay, or for them to bear you either, Sir John.

Fal. Nay, whoever has me, she must be no tenderling; she must be none of your gingerbread lasses, that will crumble to pieces, in the towzling. She must be none of your wishy-washy, panada gentry neither; your curd and whey gentlefolks, that cannot support the embraces of a soldier; I must have a kicksy-wicksey of more substantial stuff.

Bar. Why, Sir John, what say you to madam Ursula, your old sweetheart? You have courted her to my knowledge these twenty years last past. I suppose you know her great-aunt is dead, and has left her four hundred marks a year.

Fal. No, by the Lord, I heard nothing on't. She sent me a letter, indeed, into Gloucestershire: but I was over a bottle, and would not interrupt the glass to read it. I knew it was hers by the superscription, which by the way, however, was as unintelligible as the hand-writing on the wall. It had never reached me had not the bearer been a decypherer. Go, Bardolph, fetch it; you will find it among other trumpery in my cloak bag.

[*Exit* BARDOLPH.

Fal. Four hundred marks a year, quoth he! It were not an unreasonable competence, were not sherries comparatively so dear. But if the female incumbrance on it should turn out a shrew, the Lord have mercy on me! I shall be paid off for the sins of my youth. Let me bethink me. Four hundred marks a year! I have, it is true, small hopes from Hal; and shall grow old some time or other. These aches in my limbs forebode it. I cannot hold out for ever; that's certain. Were it not good, therefore, to make a virtue of necessity, and take up while I am in case to reap the credit of reformation? Could I reconcile it to my interest, I believe my inclination would follow.

BARDOLPH *re-enters.*

Bar. There, Sir John, is the letter.

Fal. Come on: let us see if we are master of so much Arabic as to find out her meaning. [*Reads*]—Hum —— hum ——hum ——! Why, dame Ursula, thou hast a memory. I could have credited thee for subtlety, on account of that old friend to woman, the serpent: but how thou couldst remember for fifteen years together what money I owed thee—that indeed I cannot account for. I have myself forgot it long since. She tells me here, I have borrowed five hundred pounds of her at times, as tokens of my love.—By the Lord, and as I am a soldier, I will love her still, and she shall command semblable proofs of it.—[*Readson.*] Hum——hum——Repayment of the money or the performance of my engagements! How! am I then to be married on compulsion? That will go most damnably against the grain. But hold—if I marry, her money will be mine: if not, she may cease to lend when she pleases; and the fortune of that man is always at the turning of the tide, who depends on the caprice of a woman.

Bar. Why marry her then, Sir John. I dare say she has heard nothing of your disgrace at court; so that she won't stand upon terms.

Fal. Marry, Bardolph, and I am half resolved to do so. Yea, by the Lord, and I will too. She has besides, two thousand pounds in money; I will courageously make the attack, and mount the breach of matrimony. If I fall into the hands of the Philistines; good night. It is but going into purgatory a few years before my time. Bardolph, get me pen and ink, in the Cupid. Thou shalt be one of Love's messengers. I will write to her in trope and figure: metaphor and hyperbole carry all before them with the women. Let her resist lies and nonsense if she can. [*Exeunt.*

NYM, DOLL, *and* QUICKLY *enter.*

Doll. But do you think, Nym, they won't discover us?

Nym. Not if you mind the trick of it, and don't betray yourselves. The old 'squire is as rampant as a goat, and conceited as an ape. And as for the young one, he has but four senses out of the five.—Let not your breath smell of aquavitæ, nor your lips smack of bawdry. Array yourselves antique, look modest, and speaks supernaculum. Do this, and they'll never suspect you.

Quick. O, let me alone for speaking supernaculum; I have a set of the courtliest phrases in my huswifry book! I'll con them by heart.

Nym. Well, go prosper: Pistol will be here presently.

Quick. Fear not——we'll lose no time: come, Doll, we shall be made women, if this plot succeeds. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Dame* URSULA, *and* BRIDGET *attending.*

Urs. And do you think, Bridget, Sir John will be at last as good as his word then? How sits my coif to-day? I would thou hadst bought me one of those new-fashioned farthingales.

Brid. O, madam, you are mighty fine as it is, truly—and, I am sure, Sir John can do nothing less than admire you.

Urs. Thinkest thou so, Bridget? Why, to be certain, a peach-coloured satin does become my complexion hugely. But I think the roses are faded in my cheeks. Well, no matter; he might have gathered them twenty years ago, had not he been a rover. I hope, however, he has sowed

his wild oats now, and that I shall yet have the satisfaction to be called my Lady Falstaff.

Brid. To be sure, madam; and though Sir John is but a knight at present, he will very assuredly, now the young king is crowned, be made a great lord, and may be a duke. Indeed, madam, I cannot think of less.

Urs. And then shall I be a duchess, Bridget. Dame Ursula a duchess!

Brid. Ay, madam, that will be a day to see, if I am so happy as to be in your grace's favour.

Urs. For certain, Bridget, thou shalt. Well, this love is a strange thing! there Sir John has deceived me a thousand times, and yet, I know not how, he always persuaded me he was sincere.

Brid. A sure sign you loved him, madam.

Urs. And yet to be sure, before I received his letter, I thought I never should hear from him again, and had almost come to a resolution to cast him entirely off.

Brid. In good sooth, madam, that is very prudent; to cast a lover off when we find he will leave us.

Urs. I think so, and not a little imprudent to do it before, for one of my years at least.

Brid. Why, madam, you are not so old.

Urs. Indeed, but I am——old enough to know I ought not to part with one lover till I am sure of another.

Brid. To be sure, madam, a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; but the sport of hampering the rogues, who are at liberty, is so vastly pretty.

Urs. Ay, if we were sure of catching them at last; but, Bridget, Bridget, how often do they escape through our fingers, and give us the slip! Besides, it is for younger lasses than I to go bird-catching——I cannot throw salt on the tail of a sparrow now.

Brid. Nay, say not so, madam; you forget your new lover, Don Anticho del Pistolo.

Urs. Hang him, fustian-pated rogue, whoever he be, to pester me with his epistles.——To write letters for his comrade to thee too! Well, as I live, I will expose this pair of bombards to Sir John. I will shew him their letters.

Brid. Madam, the knight is coming.

Urs. Bless us, Bridget, and so he is. Introduce him, and leave us.

FALSTAFF *enters.*

Fal. Well, my fair princess, see thy wandering knight.

Urs. Welcome to London, Sir John, thou art indeed a wanderer.

Fal. A true knight-errant for thy sake.

Urs. For my sake, Sir John?

Fal. Ay, for thine, my Helen. Have I not encountered tremendous giants and fiery dragons, in the rebels of Northumberland and Wales? And then for magicians and enchanted castles: Owen Glendower and his Welch devils, we put to the rout; and many a strong-hold between here and West Chester have I visited, releasing fair damsels and distressed 'squires from captivity. I brought two of the latter up to town; I would they were safely immured in the country again.

Urs. And all these exploits for me, Sir John.

Fal. As I am a true knight, to lay my laurels at thy feet.

Urs. Do you then still love me in sincerity, Sir John?

Fal. Do I love thee? Am I a soldier? Have I courage? Love thee! I will be thy Troilus, and thou shalt be my Cressida.

Urs. You have long told me so, indeed.

Fal. And can I lie? Thou shalt be sole possessor of my person and wealth. Thou shalt share in the honours done me at the court of the new king. Thou shalt——but what shalt thou not do? We will be married incontinently.

Urs. O, Sir John, you know your own power, and our sex's weakness; but, indeed, for decency, I cannot so speedily consent. Besides, Sir John, I am not yet put in possession of my estate and monies.

Fal. Nay, then, as thou say'st, love, for decency's sake, we must bear with a short delay; but I will no longer be kept out of possession than thou art.

Urs. You shall not, Sir John; and, in the mean time, our lawyers shall confer on the terms of our marriage.

Fal. I hate lawyers. Let a priest suffice. Am not I a man of honour?

To do thee less than justice were a sin,
Give me thy lips, we'll settle all within.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Chamber.*

Justice SHALLOW *enters, with Mrs* QUICKLY, *dressed in tawdry clothes.*

Quick. Nay, forsooth, Mr Shallow, I am too young a widow; much too young to think of a second husband.

Shal. Not so, fair mistress. If to wed be good, the sooner married still the better speed. My assiduities will make you soon forget your former spouse.

Quick. Your acidities, indeed, are very great, Mr Shallow. But you are too pressing: I cannot so soon forget poor Quickly.——What the goujeres have I said?

Shal. Quickly!—I thought your husband's name was——

Quick. Yes, yes, and so it was; but I called him always Quickly, because he was ever so slow. He died, poor man, of a slow melancholy. Always asleep! night and day asleep.

Shal. Hah! addicted to somnolency.

Quick. Ay, so the doctors said. He died of a solemnity; and a solemn end, I warrant ye, he made of it.

Shal. He was too fat and corpulent, perhaps; I am leaner.

Quick. Yes, sir, he grew fat and burstened, by sotting with his guests, instead of minding the main chance, and scoring double.

Shal. Say you? mistress!——

Quick. Blisters on my nimble tongue.—I say, Mr Shallow, he was rich; and, keeping open house, had store of guests, that made a world of trouble.

Shal. Open house, and leave so much behind him: that is rare! he traded greatly?

Quick. Greatly, Mr Shallow.

Shal. And bore arms.

Quick. Two pumpions on a cucumber bed.

Shal. They will quarter.—I'll settle on thee fairly, widow.

Quick. Will you, Mr Shallow?

Shal. Ecod, I will. Ay, twice as much for such another smile. Odds heart, that look shot through me like an arrow. Nay, I will kiss thee, fackins will I——

[*They struggle;* SHALLOW *kisses her, and she breaks from him in affected anger.*

Odds bobs! a dainty widow!

Quick. You're rude, sir; I must leave you. [*Exit.*

Shal. Hah! gone! then Shallow shall not stay behind, but will pursue, and force thee to be kind. [*Exit.*

Enter Master SLENDER *and* DOLL TEARSHEET.

Slen. [*Sings.*] Slender and tender,
And no mere pretender.

Ha! said I well, Mrs Beatrice?

Doll. Ay, and sung well too, sir.

Slen. Nay, I have a sweet breath to sing with: that's the truth of it. And yet I warrant you did not know I could sing so well, when you first fell in love with me.

Doll. Oh, fye, Mr Slender, you make me blush.—Young maidens should not be told so, though it were true. But, pray, where learnt you now that I was in love with you? Who told you this?

Slen. Marry, that did my uncle Shallow's fencing master, the Don with the hard name. I should otherwise have blushed more by half than you. Hang me if you had caught me at falling in love first. But one good turn deserves another, as we say in the country.

Doll. To be sure, Mr Slender hath parts.

Slen. Marry, would I might be hanged else. Why, do you know, that I have had maidens in love with me twice and once before now?

Doll. In the country belike?

Slen. Yea, verily, there was Mrs Anne Page of Windsor, would have given, I warrant ye, more than I wot of, to be married to me.

Doll. And you would not have her.

Slen. Yes, I would have had her then; but I know not how, they cozened me, and married me to a great lubberly boy.

Doll. To a boy!

Slen. Yes, la, but for that trick, if ever I marry any body again, I'll take care they don't wear doe-skin breeches under their petticoats; that I will.

Doll. Ha! ha! ha!

Slen. Nay, it was no such laughing matter that I know of.

Doll. Ha! ha! ha!

Slen. Ecod if you laugh so at me, handsome as you are, I'll go and tell my uncle; so I will. [*Exit.*

Doll. Go thy way with God's blessing, for a fool; were it not for thy wealth, Doll Tearsheet would not follow thee. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Tavern in Eastcheap.*

FALSTAFF *enters, laughing.*

Fal. Don Anticho del Pistolo! what a bombast rogue it is! I knew his hand writing the moment I saw it. But I have put a spoke into the wheel of his contrivance. Dame Ursula and her maid have given these rascals encouragement. If they bite, the scoundrels will be hooked.

FRANCIS *enters.*

Fran. Sir John, here is the hobbling friar that has been so often to ask for you. Shall I say you are at home?

Fal. Ay, let him in.—What can the gouty precisian want with me?

Friar enters.

Fri. Peace be with you. Sir John, God save ye.

Fal. Thank thee, good father. What is your reverence's will?

Fri. I think thou dost not know me, Sir John. It is indeed, many years since our personal intimacy:—your way of life and mine——

Fal. Were something different, father, to be sure; and, though I may have seen you before, it is so long since I have been at shrift, that I must crave your pardon if I have totally forgot you. And yet your reverence may be my ghostly father, for aught I know.

Fri. Fy, fy, Sir John, a man of your age and gravity.

Fal. Hoh! if your business be to chide me, I shut mine ears.

Fri. If you will not admit your wound to be probed, how can you expect to be cured, Sir John?

Fal. Cured! 'sblood, I took thee for a priest, and I find thou art a surgeon.

Fri. A spiritual one, Sir John; and such as your disorder requires.

Fal. Dost thou know my case then? A spiritual surgeon, sayst thou? I am not given over by the surgeons bodily yet. Who call in the divine till they have sent out the doctor?

Fri. I know your case well, Sir John: It is perhaps less your body than your mind that is affected.

Fal. Nay, like enough. I have, indeed, been damnably dispirited ever since the king's coronation. A confounded melancholy hangs upon me like a quotidian ague.

Fri. It is that melancholy, and the cause of it, Sir John, I would remove.

Fal. And how wouldst thou remove it? By providing me with a charge of horse, and restoring me to the king's favour. I know no other way.

Fri. By inducing thee to repent, and be restored to the favour of the King of kings; which thou hast forfeited by a dissolute and abandoned life. Dost thou not think thou art in a state of reprobation?

Fal. Pray, friar, by what authority dost thou take upon thee to catechise me? Dost thou come out of mere charity, or art thou employed by thy superiors?

Fri. Suppose the former, Sir John.

Fal. Suppose the former, father friar? why then the devil is so strong in me, that I should be tempted to throw thee headlong down stairs for thy charitable impertinence.

Fri. Thy ill-manners, Sir John, would be inexcusable, were it not to be supposed the consequence of an habitual antipathy to every thing that is good. But I will not lay claim to greater merit than is my due.—I am come by order of my lord-chief-justice; who is so much your friend as to interest himself in your reformation.

Fal. My lord-chief-justice! that's another matter. I cry thee mercy, reverend father. I find thou'rt not the man I took thee for. Your reverence does me honour, and I profess I am much indebted to his lordship's kind love and regard to my soul's health.

Fri. You'll hear me then, Sir John?

Fal. Yea, Heaven forbid I should not——what I said was meant against those officious zealots, who are so forward to pry into men's consciences that will not bear the looking into.

Fri. Sir John, we know your failings; and shall not put you to the trouble of auricular confession at present.

Fal. There, friar, thou winnest my heart. Come sit thee down. Wilt drink a glass of sack?

Fri. I never do, Sir John.

Fal. I cry thee mercy, then. Here is to your reverence's health; and now, I'll tell thee what, I do protest, I sit me now upon the stoll of repentance, and have been honestly deliberating, some time past, to change my course of life. I am heartily tired of it. Indeed I am, good father.

Fri. I am glad to find thee in such promising dispositions, and think thou couldst not do better than to betake thyself, agreeable to his lordship's intentions, to some monastery, where thou wilt be secluded from temptations, and have all spiritual assistance to encourage thee to mortify the desires of the flesh.

Fal. Hold thee there, good father. Let me understand thee. What! would his lordship make a monk of me? I must there beg his pardon. A monk; and to mortify the flesh! For Heaven's sake, good father, consider what a mortification indeed that must be to me, who have six times the quantity of any other man. If I must be included within the pale of the church, why not make a canon of me (not indeed a minor canon) but a prebendary, or a bishop, now. Something might be said for either of these. But for a monk! I know not any thing I am less fit for; unless indeed his lordship had meant to make a running footman of me.

Fri. Nay, Sir John, his lordship will not use compulsion in this. He will not so far lay a restraint on your inclinations.

Fal. O, if I ever find myself that way inclined, his lordship may depend on it I shall be as ready as ever to follow my inclinations. But the lesson of lean and sallow abstinence is very long and hard, good father; I am not gotten half-way through the first chapter yet.

Fri. Some steps, however, Sir John, you must take towards a more reputable way of life; and that speedily too, otherwise you will be stript of the honours of knighthood, and the king's sentence of banishment will be strictly put in execution against you.

Fal. As to the matter of knighthood, once a knight, and always a knight, you know. The king may make as many knights as he pleases, but he will not easily unmake them again. My title will not depend on the king's courtesy, but on that of my followers. I am, notwithstanding, very desirous to give his lordship satisfaction: and do assure thee, on the honour of a soldier, of the sincerity of my repentance.

Fri. And yet this may be only a transitory fit of penitence, owing to your last disappointment. What reason canst thou give me to hope this state of mind will continue?

Fal. Why, father, what I am shortly going to do, is an act, that has confined many a man to a state of repentance, which has continued to the last hour of his life.

Fri. This, Sir John, is saying something. Pray what are you going to do?

Fal. I have taken a resolution, father, to—— What dost thou think now it is I have resolved upon?

Fri. Some commendable act of penance, no doubt.

Fal. Nay, it may well be called so, I believe. I am determined, good father, to marry.

Fri. Call you that an act of penance, Sir John? Is marriage a state of mortification?

Fal. I wish I may not find it so.

Fri. Well, Sir John, marriage is a holy state; and in some degree I approve your resolution; but, in the estimation of the church, it is also an holy act, and ought not to be entered into unad-

visedly. Your repentance should precede your receiving the benefit of that sacrament.

Fal. O, doubt not but I shall repent me sufficiently afterwards.

Fri. Ah! Sir John, Sir John, I fear me you are no true penitent; but, however, it may be lawful to salve what cannot be effectually cured. I did not expect to make a convert at the first interview. If thou takest any measures that tend towards reformation, thou shalt have my prayers and best assistance therein.—Another time I will hold farther converse with thee.

Fal In the mean time, good father, let me stand fair in your report to my lord-chief-justice and his majesty.

Fri. Thou shalt stand fairer than I fear thou deservest. Farewell. [*Exit.*

Fal. [*Solus.*] Fare thee well, good father friar. —What an hypocritical puritan! Would not drink sack! Not with the ungodly, I suppose. But I am damnably mistaken, if he be not indebted for that rosy countenance and the gout, to the penetrating qualities of old sherris.

BARDOLPH *enters.*

Fal. Well, Bardolph, what news dost thou bring?

Bar. Marry, Sir John, I have just seen a sight that you would have chuckled at.

Fal. And what is that?

Bar. Why, mother Quickly and Doll Tearsheet, attired like dames of fashion, and courted by Justice Shallow and Master Slender. For my own part, I'm out of the plot, but I find the contrivance is deep:—the 'squires are caught. Pistol and Nym are somehow at the bottom of it. That's all I can learn.

Fal. Bardolph, those knaves would leave me, and set up for themselves. The 'squires are mine; a lawful prey, and shall not be fed upon without our leave. Learn more, and I will bethink me how to counteract the villainous machinations of these runagates. But, now, attend me forth.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

URSULA *and* BRIDGET *enter.*

Urs. Now, Bridget, mark me well. That errant knave,
Our spanish suitor, will anon be here.
Sir John requests that I do greet him kindly,
And give him flattering earnest of success.

Brid. Doubt not my cunning: I've been taught ere while to set an egg upon its little end.

Urs. A grannum's secret, Bridget; but no more. —What creature's that, who, with enormous strides,
Measures the pavement yonder?

Brid. 'Tis the Don——I will be ready, madam, when you please, to scare him hence. [*Exit.*

Urs. Nay, he shall have some sour as well as sweet;
Keen as he is, all honey is not meet.

PISTOL *enters.*

Pis. Fair dame, I kiss your hands; your gentle brief,
Borne by the winged Mercury, came to hand;
And sends your slave to meet his amorous doom.

Urs. I fear, sir, I have trespassed on the bounds
Of maiden modesty, to write so freely.
What will the world say of this strange demeanour?

Pis. Breathes he the vital air will dare to cast
Reflections base on Ursula's fair name?

Urs. Indeed, Signior Anticho, I have a woman's timidity, and am apprehensive my behaviour in this particular will seem too light. Affections of so speedy growth are blamed, as weeds too rank to thrive in true love's garden.

Pis. No general rule's without exception, lady.
The object of your choice—Pistolo's fame
Will silence all that hear and know his name.

Urs. In that, indeed, I place my confidence: and yet a stranger, till his worth's approved, however noble in his native soil, is open to suspicion. Not that your valour, birth, or virtuous fame I mean to question; but, to please my phantasy, and justify my conduct to the world, I would know more of your high rank and pedigree. What is the blazonry of its distinction?

Pis. Pistolo wears his coat upon his sword.
Behold this blade——The very steel is dy'd
[*Draws.*
With blood of Infidels, Jews, Turks, and Moors.

Urs. It hath a scurvy coat upon't indeed.

Pis. True, lady, this no burnish'd Finsbury blade,
Ta'en by young cutlers from their stock in trade,
And in Moorfields on holidays display'd——
A soldier's weapon this that bravely fell
In Palestine on Saracens, pell-mell.
The gift of that renown'd and peerless paragon
Rhodomontado hight, the king of Arragon.

Urs. And hath Pistolo's valour then been shown
In Palestine? That merit's great, I own.

Pis. There by this sword so many foes were slain,
That it was called the flaming sword of Spain.
[*Putting up his sword.*

Urs. Indeed! 'Twere much a warrior to withstand,
Who comes victorious from the Holy Land.

BRIDGET *enters, in a hurry.*

Brid. Good gracious! madam! Sir John Falstaff.

Pis. Ha! who? who? what's that? Falstaff didst thou say?

Urs. No matter, sir, you shall not hence away.
It is a quondam sweetheart; whom, for thee,
I shall dismiss with frowns, as thou shalt see.

Brid. Heavens, madam, I would not for the world Sir John should come in while the cavalier is here.—We should have bloody doings, I warrant. Did not the knight, when he was here last, complain of your indifference, and vow vengeance on your new lover?

Pis. [*Aside.*] By Styx, he'll know and foil me.

Urs. Poh! poh! this gentleman fears him not, nor twenty such. Don Pistolo's sword hath been flesh'd among the Moors.

Brid. Moors! lack-a-day! what talk you of Moors? What are simple Moors to such a paramour as he? You know, madam, he is desperation at the loss of your ladyship's affection.

Pis. Thou, mistress Abigail, art in the right——
Prior pretensions if the knight doth boast,
Why happy man be's dole, say I,
Il primo venuto il primo servito.

Urs. How's this, signior? Shall not a woman of my age and fashion make my own choice? And can your honour thus desert your fortune?

Pis. Desert my fortune! ha! why—what—O no———

Urs. Nay, nay, I claim protection from your sword
Against this rude intruder.

Pis. Furies!——[*Pauses.*] Oh! I have it.
Enough—thou sayest—my sword thou shalt command,
'Gainst Pagan recreant, or Christian knight.
Come forth, Toledo—[*Draws.*] Ha! what's this I see?
O, blunder vile! unfortunate mistake!
My varlet hath equipp'd me with a foil,
A blunt and battered foil, sans point and temper:
It would not parry even a bulrush: this!
[*Throws away his sword, which* BRIDGET *picks up.*

Urs. Bridget, let's see———
[*Takes the sword, and clapping the point to the ground, bends it double.*]
Alas! 'tis so, it's plain.
Ha, ha, ha, the flaming sword of Spain!
'The gift of the renown'd and peerless paragon,
'Rhodomontado hight, the king of Arragon!'
[*Holding it up in derision.*
[*Turning to* PISTOL.] Nay, do not take my humour thus amiss;
I'm light of heart, but nothing mean t' offend.
As with this paultry foil thou can'st not fight,
Myself will with 't encounter this same knight.
Bridget will safe conduct thee to the gate,
Go, and good tidings speedily await. [*Exit.*

Pis. [*Looking after her.*] The gibbet be my portion, if I trow,
Whether she means to jilt me now or no;
But *fata trahunt*——Abigail, lead on,
If Falstaff's near, 'tis time that I were gone.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*A Street.*

Justice SHALLOW *and Master* SLENDER *enter.*

Shal. Take me—take me this letter, I say, to Sir John Falstaff. That is his suttling-house. I will maul his cloak-bag of chitterlings with my rapier, as I may.

Slen. And will you fight him, cousin? Well, hang me if I carry the challenge. I never could abide the thoughts of cold iron. Even a key put down my back for a bloody nose, ugh—ugh—ugh, would always set me a-shuddering.

Shal. Don't tell me—if the law will not get me my money, I'll be revenged of him. The tun-bellied knave shall not make such a fool of me. I will have his blood or my money.

Slen. His blood! O lud! O lud! Why, cousin Shallow, you are enough to——

Shal. Carry me this letter, I say, to Sir John Falstaff. What is it to you? If I am killed, you are my heir, and come in for my land and beeves. So, do as I bid you.

Slen. Ecod, that's true. I did not think of that; if my cousin's killed, I come in for his estate. [*Aside.*] Ay, I'll carry him the challenge. Hey! here he comes, with his bottle-nosed man, that picked my pocket at Windsor.

FALSTAFF *and* BARDOLPH *enter.*

Shal. Sir John! Sir John Falstaff!

Bar. Sir John, Justice Shallow calls ye.

Fal. What would the blade of spear-mint have with me? I have done with him.

Shal. But I have not yet done with you, Sir John! I would first have my thousand pound of you again.

Fal. You would, Master Shallow! like enough.—You must take me then in the humour. I am at present ill-disposed to your suit.

Shal. Tut, Sir John! I have said I will not tamely put up this wrong. If I do, I shall be flouted and jibed to death: I shall be pursued by the mockery of a whole hundred.

Fal. Not unlikely. But, believe me, the more you bustle in this business, the more you will expose yourself. The more you stir——you know the proverb, Master Shallow, it is a little homely, so let that pass. Yet, let me advise thee; rest content.

Shal. Content! I am not content. I cannot be content. Nay, I will not be content. Give me back the money, or I will have satisfaction of thee.

Fal. Satisfaction, say'st thou? Why, thou wilt not dare me to the combat.

Shal. Such provocation would make a coward fight, Sir John.

Fal. If it make thee fight, I'll be sworn it would: for I have seen thee tremble at the shaking of a wheat-ear.

Shal. To be bamboozled! cheated! laught at! I will not put it up. By heavens I will not put it up.

Fal. Well said, Master Shallow. Now I see there's mettle in thee. But surely thou would'st not be the first to break the peace! thou, whose office it is to punish the breach of it.

Shal. Sir John, there are times and reasons for all things. If you will neither give me my money nor gentleman's satisfaction, I will have thee tossed in a blanket for a poltroon as thou art.

Fal. They must be stout carls, Master Shallow, that toss me in a blanket.

Shal. Well, well, we shall see—I'll parley with you no longer. Cousin Slender, don't stand shill I, shall I, but give him the note.

Slen. Ay, ay, if coz is killed, I shall have his estate, and so there's the challenge.

[*Exeunt* SHAL. *and* SLEN.

Fal. A challenge!—By the Lord and it is a challenge. I am called upon here to meet him on Tower-hill incontinently at single rapier. Hoo! what a turluru! In the name of common sense is the fool turned madman? What means the simple tony by this? To get his money again?—Does he think by running me through the pericranium to become my heir at law?—The fearful stag is at bay, and become desperate.—But let me see—What's to be done here? I am in person too much of a knight to engage with so little a 'squire———I have it.——Bardolph, I being your master, and a knight, thou art by the laws of chivalry no less than a 'squire. Now, as I take it, this quarrel is properly thine: thou must meet Justice Shallow at single rapier.

Bar. I, Sir John! he has no quarrel against me. The challenge is given to your honour.

Fal. True, but I tell thee my honour disdains to encounter a pitiful 'squire: thou must take my sword and fight him.

Bar. I shall only disgrace your arms, Sir John.

Fal. Go to, you will do well. He knows nothing of the sword; and, should he challenge thee at pistols, put a charge into each barrel, and present thy nose at him; he will never stand thy fire.

Bar. Indeed, Sir John, I must be excused. I never could fight in my life, unless there was something to be got by it; a booty on the highway or so.

Fal. Why, 'tis for a thousand pounds, you rogue.

Bar. And where's the money?

Fal. At my cashier's.

Bar. Well then, Sir John, why should we fight for it?

Fal. Bardolph, thou art a coward; but no matter.—I have a thought: I will meet him myself. Go, fetch the buckler I fought with at Shrewsbury. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Tower-Hill.*

PISTOL *and Justice* SHALLOW *enter, stript for the Combat.*

Pis. Dread nought, brave 'squire, the knight's a coward rank.

Shal. I am glad to hear that, and yet I would I had had a lesson or two more, before I had encountered him.

Pis. Bear thy point thus——sa, sa, friend Shallow, sa.
Do thus, I say, and trust Pistolo's art.
I to the buxom widow will relate
This deed of prowess.

Shal. I will essay; but some one comes this way; let us retire, and try that pass again. [*Exeunt.*

Dr CAIUS *and Man enter.*

Caius. Jack Rugby, follow me, Jack Rugby: I ave hear dere is to be duel fought hereabouts, by and by. If de parties be not killed outright, dey may vant assistance. Ve must vatch the opportunity, Jack Rugby.

Rug. To prevent the gentlemen fighting, sir—

Caius. To prevent their fighting! vat ave we to do wid dat? No, you fool, Jack; to take care of de vounded. Dat is my business.

Rug. But how if the other should run away?

Caius. By gar, let him run: he be no patient for me. Come dis way. [*Exeunt.*

FALSTAFF *enters.*

Fal. Aha—aha—What a vile mist there is abroad to-day! I cannot see a sword's length before me.—This must be the spot. But where is the adversary? I would not have him, methinks, lost in the fog.—Master Shallow! Master Shallow!

SHALLOW *re-enters.*

Shal. Ay, ay, Sir John, here am I.

Fal. Saints and good angels guard us! What is this?

Shal. Come, Sir John, draw, draw.

Fal. It calls me by my name too! *Jesu Maria!* It is no *deceptio visus.* In the name of heaven and earth, what art thou? Ouphe, fairy, ghost, hobgoblin, or demon? *Exorciso te.—Pater noster.*——

Shal. Come, Sir John, don't think to put me from my purpose; you know me very well. You know Justice Shallow to his cost.

Fal. How! can this thing be Robert Shallow, of Gloucestershire, Esq. justice of the peace, and of the quorum? I took it for some strolling ghost escaped out of purgatory, by all that's terrible.

Shal. Sir John, this mockery shall not suffice you.

Fal. Nay, it is true, as I am a sinner.

Shal. Will you fight me, Sir John, or will you not?

Fal. Fight thee! When thou seest the princely eagle descend to encounter the tom-tit. What! shall the lofty elephant wield his proboscis against a mite? Shall Sir John Falstaff draw his martial sword against such a pig-widgeon as thou?

Shal. What then did you come here for, Sir John? If you would not be treated as a coward, lay down your target and draw.

Fal. Lay down my target, sayst thou? Who would be fool then? Look ye, Master Shallow (since shallow thou wilt be) if I fight, it must be on equal terms.—It is but equitable that my body should be secured, when I engage with an unsub-

stantial form; a thing that has none. Dost thou think me such a goose-cap as to lay open this fair round belly to the point of thy rapier, when thou presentest not a mark for me? It were as good as pricking at a lottery, ten thousand blanks to a prize, to make a thrust at thee. It were indeed more than a miracle to hit what, rhetorically speaking, is impalpable. But come, if thou must fight with me, thou shalt not say I deal unfairly by thee. To draw my sword would be needless: for hit thee I never shall.—That's flat. Therefore, Toledo, rest thou in thy scabbard. This is my ward —[*Stands on his defence with his target.*] Carry thy point as thou wilt: if thou canst not come into me before thou art weary, the money is mine; if thou dost, and woundest me, I will then—keep it to pay the surgeon. So come on.

Shal. Sir John, you are a cowardly knave, and I will kill you if I can.

[*They fight. Mr* SHALLOW *thrusts at Sir* JOHN, *who receives his point always on his target.*

Ful. Well said, Master Shallow.—Bravo!—To't again.——Sa—sa.

[SHALLOW *breaks his sword, and* FALSTAFF *closes with him, and seizes him by the collar; on which* SHALLOW *falls down on his knees, and* FALSTAFF *claps the target on his head.*]

Ha! have I nabb'd you? You should have appointed sticklers, Mr Shallow. What if I cut thy throat now? [*Taking off the target.*

Shal. Sir John, my life is in your hands; but you know you have wronged me.

Ful. Well then, thy wrongs be forgotten; and, on that condition I give thee back thy forfeited life.

Shal. And I hope also you won't bear malice, Sir John, against me for the future.

Ful. By the Lord, not I. I do admire thy magnanimity and valour. Why, thou art a very mirror of prowess, and pink of squire-errantry. John of Gaunt was a fool to thee. Were I a king, thou shouldst, for this day's work, be made a knight with all the honours of chivalry. Nay, by our lady, I will take majesty upon me, and knight thee myself. 'Rise up Sir Robert Shallow, knight of the most horrible order of combatants and murderers of the fifth button.' And now, Sir Robert, if thou dost not think the title I've bestowed on thee worth the thousand pounds I owe thee, I will for the first time make restitution. Thou shalt be repaid out of my wife's portion. For thou must know I am this night to be married, and have broke into the round sum to make handsome preparations for my nuptials.

Shal. I give thee joy, Sir John; and, as I find there is still so much honour in thee, I will open my heart, and confess to thee, that both my nephew Slender and I are going to be married too.

Ful. Ay! to whom, Master Shallow, to whom?

Shal. I to the wealthy widow of Watling-street, and my nephew Slender, to buxom Beatrice her niece, of Bucklersbury.

Ful. Master Shallow, you are deceived, Master Shallow. I will be a friend to thee. The widow and her niece are impostors.

Shal. Impostors!

Ful. Whores! whores, Mr Shallow!

Shal. How! the widow of Watling-street, and Mrs Beatrice of Bucklersbury——

Ful. Go to, I mean thy widow—Give me thy hand; I will tell thee more as we pass along.

[*Exeunt.*

Dr CAIUS *and his Man enter.*

Caius. Dey shake hands!—Eh, morbleu; dey be one brace of cowards. Dat fat knight never once draw his rapier. By gar, did we not get more by de maladie de France, dan by de English courage, we should not get salt to our pottage, pardie. But, by gar, I will charge them both for my attendance; and if they no pay me, I will expose their no courage.——Come along, Jack Rugby. [*Exeunt.*

PISTOL *enters.*

Pis. The train takes fire, and all will soon be flames.
The 'squires are gull'd; and Doll and Quickly take
For dames of wealth. The corporal plotted well.

NYM *enters, who gives* PISTOL *a letter.*

Nym. A letter from madam Ursula; see if there's humour in it.

Pis. Ha! prize or blank! I'll open it, and read
Our fortune in the lottery-book of fate.
[PISTOL *reads to himself.*
By Jove's bright welkin, 'tis a golden prize.
Nought could withstand the flash of Pistol's prime.
She writes us here she scorns the wassel knight,
Who keeps to-day high revels at the Globe:
Where, if we meet, we may in masquerade
Be sped; I to the mistress, you the maid.

Nym. Marry-trap, the humour is good; but how shall we know them?

Pis. In purple garb, like nymphs, they'll be array'd;
And in feign'd voices speak: the word is *soh!*
Let us about our disguises strait:
Cunning outwits, and courage conquers, fate.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Ball-room.*

FALSTAFF *enters, with* SHALLOW *and* SLENDER *in Dominos.—Their Masks in their hands.*

Shal. Marry, Sir John, thou hast a pithy pericranium; this is a notable contrivance. I have appointed the parties, as you directed, to be dressed in purple, and to meet us among the revellers here at the Globe.

Ful. Thou hast done well, Master Shallow: and I see you and your nephew are clothed in the same disguises as Nym and Pistol.—You shall see sport, Mr Shallow. But see, the maskers come this way. I must go meet the bride.

[*Exit* FALSTAFF.

[SHALLOW *and* SLENDER *put on their Masks.*

A number of Maskers enter; among the rest, PISTOL, NYM, *Mrs* QUICKLY, *and* DOLL. FALSTAFF *re-enters, leading in* URSULA, *followed by* BRIDGET.

Fal. Gentles, you're welcome.—You see I come unmasked among you. It were superfluous for him to hide his face who could not be concealed for his belly. Could I mask that, indeed, I might pass in disguise But come, begin the dance: I hope there will be yet concealment enough in this revelry to defeat the rogueries contrived in darkness, and bring them to light.

Pis. Nym, who are those in purple vestments clad?

Nym. The two in green?

Pis. In robes of Tyrian dye.

Nym. By their garb they should be the parties; let us accost them. The priest is ready without. We will be speedy; and, when sped, return unmasked to tantalize the knight.

[*They go up to* QUICKLY *and* DOLL, *and take them out.*

A Dance. PISTOL *and* NYM *re-enter, unmasked.*

Fal. Pistol, how now? wherefore hast doff'd thy mask?—Art thou the master of this feast? or am I thine?

Pis. That is as fortune bids, and time shall shew;
Some mount aloft, while others truckle low.
Sir Knight, no more your ancient and base tyke,
Pistol was born to wield the potent pike.

Fal. Pistol, thou art always in the clouds. Art thou drunk? or hast thou got a commission?

Pis. Gold honour buys, and Ursula hath store.

Fal. How, rascal! dost thou mean to rob my wife?

Nym. Thy wife! marry that were a good jest.—I see the humour runs well.

Pis. Not thine, but mine, proud Basilisco Knight!
Without, just married, waits thy quondam flame.

Fal. To thee?

Pis. To me.

Fal. Nym, what say'st thou?

Nym. Marry, Sir John, that's the short of it: and I myself was just now married to Mrs Bridget, her woman.

Fal. [*Turning to* URSULA.] Say, my fair queen of Sheba, is this true? unmask: nay, gentles, all unmask, that we may see what faces are put on.

Urs. You, Sir John, can answer for me.

Brid. And you for me, madam. Marry a corporal indeed! the fellows are drunk.

[PISTOL *and* NYM *look at each other with confusion and astonishment; during which time Mrs* QUICKLY *and* DOLL TEARSHEET *enter unmasked, and, passing by* PISTOL *and* NYM, *(who start back with fresh astonishment) go up to Justice* SHALLOW *and Master* SLENDER.]

Fal. How now, you bare-faced strumpets! what do you mean? This is no brothel: play no gambols here.

Quick. Marry come up, Sir John; you will not hinder my going to my husband. Mr Shallow will protect me; my dear Mr Shallow.

Doll. No, nor me neither, were he twenty Sir John Falstaffs. Sweet Mr Slender!

Shal. Goody Quickly, loose your hold, I pray you; I know you, Mrs Quickly.

Slen. Ay, and I know you too, Mrs Dorothy.

Doll. O ho! do you so? What, Sir John hath blown us, hath he? But no matter; he cannot unmarry us.

Quick. No, truly, that he cann't.

Fal. Nor would I: for, since whores and rogues have consorted, I have never seen four better match'd.

Quick. I to wise Justice Shallow.

Doll. And I to foolish Mr Slender.

Shal. Not so, hostess; keep your distance, I pray you.

Slen. No, no—keep off, Doll, keep off.

Quick. Plain Doll! do you hear that, Mrs Slender?

Doll. And hostess, truly! do you take that, Mrs Shallow?

Fal. Away—ye termagant jades; or I will demolish your frippery.—There are your cuckolds. Pistol, Nym, why stand ye there like mutes? Are you fascinated at the success of your mummery? Or are you ruminating on the comforts of cuckoldom, by anticipation? Take hence your crooked ribs.

[PISTOL *and* NYM *go and take* QUICKLY *and* DOLL *by the hand.*

Quick. What, has there been a trick then played on us in these disguises? Was I married to you, Pistol?

Pis. Dame Quickly, thou art mine. The fates have cross'd us.

Fal. Nay, I'll be sworn they have join'd you.

Doll. And was I married to you, Nym?

Nym. Even so, Doll. I am heartily sorry for it; but luck hath turn'd tail upon us, that's the trick on't.

Doll. A very scurvy trick, indeed; but I had so many husbands before, that one more or less breaks no squares with Doll. Come, Mrs Quickly, be of good cheer: Pistol is better than nobody: he will protect thee by out-swaggering the swaggerers.

Pis. Contented I, since so the fates decree,
Soldier no more, a victualler I'll be;
The martial sword exchange for carving knife,
And cut out viands for the means of life.
No more in anger fight, but joyous dine,
And 'stead of drawing blood, draw sparkling wine;
Nay, should Sir John himself my service lack,
At the Boar's Head he'll find a glass of sack.

Fal. But wilt thou put no lime in it, Pistol?

Pis. No, by Falernian Bacchus, for my knight.

Fal. Then will I be thy guest. Nay, by'r lady, thou shalt for once be mine too. I will not break off the thread of our quondam familiarity with so little grace as majesty hath done. I do invite you all, therefore, to supper with me. And if you

cannot laugh over the success of your own contrivances, be merry on the consummation of my nuptials.
Come, spouse, though long indeed hath been our courting,
We're not quite past the days of love and sporting;
'Tis true, a younger bridegroom had you sped,
He might have been less prone to sleep in bed:
Yet even in Autumn, some Spring flowers may grow,
As there are lilies in September blow:
Youth's wild-oats sown, 'tis ne'er too late to mend;
The worst once past, the better is the end.

[*Exeunt.*

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN FOR MRS PRITCHARD. SPOKEN BY MRS HOPKINS.

Enters, reading a Card.

THE muse of Shakespeare's compliments!—A card
T' excuse this evening's enterprising bard!
Great his presumption, to confess the truth:
But, as he pleads the passion of his youth,
Together with the magic of her charms,
Attracting him resistless to her arms;
Though somewhat by surprise she owns she suffer'd,
Yet, as no actual violence was offer'd,
She's willing, if the audience should agree,
For this one time, to set the offender free.
We women soon forgive, if not forget,
The crimes our beauties make the men commit,
Especially when once we're past our prime,
And Shakespeare's muse, like me, 's the worse for time.
For, though she charm with fancy ever young,
Though heavenly music dwell upon her tongue,
Lost many an artless smile and dimple sleek,
Which sat alluring on her virgin cheek;
Beauties, that faded on the gazer's eye,
And no cold cream of comfort can supply.
As for what Merc'ry in the Prologue told ye;
Pray, let not that from clemency with-hold ye.
That Hermes was of old a lying blade,
And practised in imposture, as his trade;
The patron he, or classic lore deceives,
Of cheats, forestallers, higglers, hucksters, thieves.
Besides—to tell you a stage-trick of ours——
But you'll not spread the secret out of doors,—
The man was no more Mercury, than I am
Queen Hecuba, the wife of Trojan Priam.
A messenger from Phœbus! He a god!
I can assure you all, 'twas Mr Dodd;
His dropping from the clouds, was all a sham;
And his pretended errand but a flam.
We've heathen gods of pasteboard, made to fly
On hempen cords across the painted sky;
Those canvas clouds, that dangle there above,
Inveloping the throne itself of Jove!
His tale fictitious too, though told so glib;
For, take it on my word, 'twas all a fib.
Old Falstaff in Elysium!—To my thinking,
So great his natural tendency to sinking,
That to the shades if he had once descended,
To bring him back, not Atlas had pretended.
Dramatic sprites (at least they tell me so,)
Dwell not with saints above, nor devils below:
But, form'd th' imagination to engage,
During their short-lived passage o'er the stage,
As mere ideal characters exist,
And stand as cyphers mark'd on Nature's list;
To genius giv'n a delegated power,
To form these transient beings of an hour;
Which, from this mimic world whene'er they go,
Are free to range in fancy's Pimlico;
A limbo large and broad; which in the schools
Is call'd by some the Paradise of Fools.
Feræ naturæ there, their preservation
Is purchased by no game association:
The poaching plagiary alone denied
A privilege, granted to each bard beside;
Who, though a cottager, to try his skill,
May shoot, or course, or hunt them down at will;
In his own paddock may the strays receive,
And scorn to ask a lordly owner's leave.
Not that but *here*, the author of the play,
By me begs leave submissively to say,
"None more than he reveres great Shakespeare's name,
Or glows with zeal to vindicate his fame."

THE

JEALOUS WIFE.

BY

GEORGE COLMAN.

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY MR LLOYD. SPOKEN BY MR GARRICK.

THE Jealous Wife! a comedy! poor man!
A charming subject! but a wretched plan.
His skittish wit, o'erleaping the due bound,
Commits flat trespass upon tragic ground.
Quarrels, upbraidings, jealousies, and spleen,
Grow too familiar in the comic scene.
Tinge but the language with heroic chime,
'Tis passion, pathos, character, sublime!
What round big words had swell'd the pompous scene,
A king the husband, and the wife a queen!
Then might distraction rend her graceful hair,
See sightless forms, and scream, and gape, and stare;
Drawcansir Death had raged without control;
Here the drawn dagger, there the poison'd bowl;
What eyes had stream'd at all the whining woe!
What hands had thunder'd at each Hah! and! Oh!
But peace! the gentle prologue custom sends,
Like drum and serjeant, to beat up for friends.
At vice and folly, each a lawful game,
Our author flies, but with no partial aim.
He read the manners, open as they lie
In Nature's volume to the general eye.
Books too he read, nor blush'd to use their store—
He does but what his betters did before.
Shakespeare has done it, and the Grecian stage
Caught truth of character from Homer's page.
If in his scenes an honest skill is shewn,
And borrowing little, much appears his own;
If what a master's happy pencil drew
He brings more forward in dramatic view;
To your decision he submits his cause,
Secure of candour, anxious for applause.
But if, all rude, his artless scenes deface
The simple beauties which he meant to grace,
If, an invader upon others' land,
He spoil and plunder with a robber's hand,
Do justice on him!—As on fools before,
And give to blockheads past one blockhead more.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

OAKLY.
Major OAKLY.
CHARLES.
RUSSET.
Sir HARRY BEAGLE.
Lord TRINKET.
Captain O'CUTTER.
PARIS.
WILLIAM.
JOHN.
TOM.
Servant to Lady Freelove.

WOMEN.

Mrs OAKLY.
Lady FREELOVE.
HARRIOT.
TOILET.
Chambermaid.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* OAKLY'S *House. Noise heard within.*

Mrs Oak. [*Within.*] Don't tell me—I know it is so—it's monstrous, and I will not bear it.

Oak. [*Within.*] But, my dear!——

Mrs. Oak. Nay, nay, &c. [*Squabbling within.*

Enter Mrs OAKLY, *with a Letter,* OAKLY *following.*

Mrs Oak. Say what you will, Mr Oakly, you shall never persuade me but this is some filthy intrigue of yours.

Oak. I can assure you, my love!——

Mrs Oak. Your love!—Don't I know your—Tell me, I say, this instant, every circumstance relating to this letter.

Oak. How can I tell you, when you will not so much as let me see it?

Mrs Oak. Look you, Mr Oakly, this usage is not to be borne. You take a pleasure in abusing my tenderness and soft disposition.—To be perpetually running over the whole town, nay, the whole kingdom too, in pursuit of your amours!—Did not I discover that you was great with mademoiselle, my own woman?—Did not you contract a shameful familiarity with Mrs Freeman?—Did not I detect your intrigue with Lady Wealthy?—Was not you——

Oak. Oons! madam, the Grand Turk himself has not half so many mistresses—You throw me out of all patience—Do I know any body but our common friends?—Am I visited by any body, that does not visit you?—Do I ever go out, unless you go with me?—And am I not as constantly by your side, as if I was tied to your apron-strings?

Mrs Oak. Go, go, you are a false man——Have not I found you out a thousand times? And have not I this moment a letter in my hand, which convinces me of your baseness?——Let me know the whole affair, or I will——

Oak. Let you know? Let me know what you would have of me——You stop my letter before it comes to my hands, and then expect that I should know the contents of it.

Mrs Oak. Heaven be praised I stopt it!—It suspected some of these doings for some time past—But the letter informs me who she is, and I'll be revenged on her sufficiently. Oh, you base man, you!

Oak. I beg, my dear, that you would moderate your passion!—Shew me the letter, and I'll convince you of my innocence.

Mrs Oak. Innocence!—Abominable!—Innocence!—But I am not to be made such a fool—I am convinced of your perfidy, and very sure that——

Oak. 'Sdeath and fire! your passion hurries you out of your senses——Will you hear me?

Mrs Oak. No, you are a base man; and I will not hear you.

Oak. Why then, my dear, since you will neither talk reasonably yourself, nor listen to reason from me, I shall take my leave till you are in a better humour. So, your servant! [*Going.*

Mrs Oak. Ay, go, you cruel man!——Go to your mistresses, and leave your poor wife to her miseries.——How unfortunate a woman am I!—I could die with vexation——

[*Throwing herself into a chair.*

Oak. There it is—Now dare not I stir a step further—If I offer to go, she is in one of her fits in an instant—Never sure was woman at once of so violent and so delicate a constitution! What shall I say to sooth her? Nay, never make thyself so uneasy, my dear—Come, come, you know I love you. Nay, nay, you shall be convinced.

Mrs Oak. I know you hate me; and that your unkindness and barbarity will be the death of me. [*Whining.*

Oak. Do not vex yourself at this rate—I love you most passionately—Indeed I do—This must be some mistake.

Mrs Oak. O, I am an unhappy woman! [*Weeping.*

Oak. Dry up thy tears, my love, and be comforted! You will find that I am not to blame in this matter—Come, let me see this letter——Nay, you shall not deny me. [*Taking the letter.*

Mrs Oak. There! take it, you know the hand, I am sure.

Oak. To Charles Oakly, Esq. [*Reading.*]—Hand! 'Tis a clerk-like hand, indeed! a good round text! and was certainly never penned by a fair lady.

Mrs Oak. Ay, laugh at me, do!

Oak. Forgive me, my love, I did not mean to laugh at thee——But what says the letter?——[*Reading.*] "Daughter eloped—you must be privy to it—scandalous—dishonourable—satisfaction—revenge"—um, um, um——" injured father,

HENRY RUSSET."

Mrs Oak. [*Rising.*] Well, sir—you see I have detected you——Tell me this instant where she is concealed.

Oak. So—so—so——This hurts me—I'm shock'd— [*To himself.*

Mrs Oak. What, are you confounded with your guilt? Have I caught you at last?

Oak. O that wicked Charles! to decoy a young lady from her parents in the country! The pro-

fligacy of the young fellows of this age is abominable. [*To himself.*

Mrs Oak. [*Half aside and musing.*] Charles!—Let me see!—Charles!—No! Impossible. This is all a trick.

Oak. He has certainly ruined this poor lady. [*To himself.*

Mrs Oak. Art! art! all art! There's a sudden turn now! You have ready wit for an intrigue, I find.

Oak. Such an abandoned action! I wish I had never had the care of him. [*To himself.*

Mrs Oak. Mighty fine, Mr Oakly! Go on, sir, go on! I see what you mean. Your assurance provokes me beyond your very falsehood itself. So you imagine, sir, that this affected concern, this flimsy pretence about Charles, is to bring you off. Matchless confidence! But I am armed against every thing—I am prepared for all your dark schemes: I am aware of all your low stratagems.

Oak. See there now! Was ever any thing so provoking? To persevere in your ridiculous—— For Heaven's sake, my dear, don't distract me. When you see my mind thus agitated and uneasy, that a young fellow, whom his dying father, my own brother, committed to my care, should be guilty of such enormous wickedness; I say, when you are witness of my distress on this occasion, how can you be weak enough and cruel enough to——

Mrs Oak. Prodigiously well, sir! You do it very well. Nay, keep it up, carry it on, there's nothing like going through with it. O you artful creature! But, sir, I am not to be so easily satisfied. I do not believe a syllable of all this—Give me the letter—[*Snatching the letter.*]—You shall sorely repent this vile business, for I am resolved that I will know the bottom of it. [*Exit.*

Oak. This is beyond all patience. Provoking woman! Her absurd suspicions interpret every thing the wrong way. She delights to make me wretched, because she sees I am attached to her, and converts my tenderness and affection into the instruments of my own torture. But this ungracious boy! In how many troubles will he involve his own and his lady's family—I never imagined that he was of such abandoned principles. O, here he comes!

Enter Major OAKLY *and* CHARLES.

Char. Good-morrow, sir!

Maj. Good-morrow, brother, good-morrow!—What! you have been at the old work, I find. I heard you—ding! dong! i'faith!—She has rung a noble peal in your ears. But how now? Why sure you've had a remarkable warm bout on't.—You seem more ruffled than usual.

Oak. I am, indeed, brother! Thanks to that young gentleman there. Have a care, Charles! you may be called to a severe account for this. The honour of a family, sir, is no such light matter.

Char. Sir!

Maj. Hey-day! What, has a curtain-lecture produced a lecture of morality? What is all this?

Oak. To a profligate mind, perhaps, these things may appear agreeable in the beginning; but don't you tremble at the consequences?

Char. I see, sir, that you are displeased with me, but I am quite at a loss to guess at the occasion.

Oak. Tell me, sir!—where is Miss Harriot Russet?

Char. Miss Harriot Russet!—Sir—Explain.

Oak. Have not you decoyed her from her father?

Char. I!—Decoyed her—Decoyed my Harriot!—I would sooner die than do her the least injury.—What can this mean?

Maj. I believe the young dog has been at her, after all.

Oak. I was in hopes, Charles, you had better principles. But there's a letter just come from her father——

Char. A letter!—What letter? Dear sir, give it me. Some intelligence of my Harriot, major!—The letter, sir, the letter this moment, for Heaven's sake!

Oak. If this warmth, Charles, tends to prove your innocence——

Char. Dear sir, excuse me——I'll prove any thing—Let me but see this letter, and I'll——

Oak. Let you see it?——I could hardly get a sight of it myself. Mrs Oakly has it.

Char. Has she got it? Major, I'll be with you again directly. [*Exit hastily.*

Maj. Hey-day! The devil's in the boy! What a fiery set of people! By my troth, I think the whole family is made of nothing but combustibles.

Oak. I like this emotion. It looks well. It may serve too to convince my wife of the folly of her suspicions. Would to Heaven I could quiet them for ever!

Maj. Why, pray now, my dear naughty brother, what heinous offence have you committed this morning? What new cause of suspicion? You have been asking one of the maids to mend your ruffle, I suppose, or have been hanging your head out of window, when a pretty young woman has past by, or——

Oak. How can you trifle with my distresses, major? Did not I tell you it was about a letter?

Maj. A letter!—hum—A suspicious circumstance, to be sure! What, and the seal a true-lover's knot now, hey! or an heart transfixt with darts; or possibly the wax bore the industrious impression of a thimble; or perhaps the folds were lovingly connected by a wafer pricked with a pin, and the direction written in a vile scrawl, and not a word spelt as it should be; ha, ha, ha!

Oak. Pooh! brother—Whatever it was, the letter, you find, was for Charles, not for me—this outrageous jealousy is the devil.

Maj. Mere matrimonial blessings and domestic comfort, brother! jealousy is a certain sign of love.

Oak. Love! it is this very love that hath made us both so miserable. Her love for me has confined me to my house, like a state prisoner, without the liberty of seeing my friends, or the use

of pen, ink, and paper; while my love for her has made such a fool of me, that I have never had the spirit to contradict her.

Maj. Ay, ay, there you've hit it; Mrs Oakly would make an excellent wife, if you did but know how to manage her.

Oak. You are a rare fellow, indeed, to talk of managing a wife—A debauched bachelor—a rattle-brained, rioting fellow—who have picked up your common-place notions of women in bagnios, taverns, and the camp; whose most refined commerce with the sex has been in order to delude country girls at your quarters, or to besiege the virtue of abigails, milliners, or mantua-makers' 'prentices.

Maj. So much the better!—so much the better! women are all alike in the main, brother, high or low, married or single, quality or no quality. I have found them so, from a duchess down to a milk-maid.

Oak. Your savage notions are ridiculous. What do you know of a husband's feelings?—You, who comprise all your qualities in your *honour*, as you call it!—Dead to all sentiments of delicacy, and incapable of any but the grossest attachments to women. This is your boasted refinement, your thorough knowledge of the world! While with regard to women, one poor train of thinking, one narrow set of ideas, like the uniform of the regiment, serves the whole corps.

Maj. Very fine, brother!—there's commonplace for you with a vengeance. Henceforth, expect no quarter from me. I tell you again and again, I know the sex better than you do. They all love to give themselves airs, and to have power: every woman is a tyrant at the bottom. But they could never make a fool of me.—No, no! no woman should ever domineer over me, let her be mistress or wife.

Oak. Single men can be no judges in these cases. They must happen in all families. But when things are driven to extremities—to see a woman in uneasiness—a woman one loves too—one's wife—who can withstand it? You neither speak nor think like a man that has loved, and been married, major!

Maj. I wish I could hear a married man speak my language——I'm a bachelor, it's true; but I am no bad judge of your case for all that. I know yours and Mrs Oakly's disposition to a hair. She is all impetuosity and fire—A very magazine of touchwood and gunpowder. You are hot enough too upon occasion, but then it's over in an instant. In comes love and conjugal affection, as you call it;—that is, mere folly and weakness—and you draw off your forces, just when you should pursue the attack, and follow your advantage. Have at her with spirit, and the day's your own, brother!

Oak. I tell you, brother, you mistake the matter. Sulkiness, fits, tears!—These, and such as these, are the things which make a feeling man uneasy. Her passion and violence have not half such an effect on me.

Maj. Why, then, you may be sure, she'll play that upon you, which she finds does most execution. But you must be proof against every thing. If she's furious, set passion against passion; if you find her at her tricks, play off art against art, and foil her at her own weapons. That's your game, brother!

Oak. Why, what would you have me do?

Maj. Do as you please, for one month, whether she likes it or not; and, I'll answer for it, she will consent you shall do as you please all her life after.

Oak. This is fine talking. You do not consider the difficulty that——

Maj. You must overcome all difficulties. Assert your right boldly, man! give your own orders to servants, and see they observe them; read your own letters, and never let her have a sight of them; make your own appointments, and never be persuaded to break them; see what company you like; go out when you please; return when you please, and don't suffer yourself to be called to account where you have been. In short, do but shew yourself a man of spirit, leave off whining about love and tenderness, and nonsense, and the business is done, brother!

Oak. I believe you are in the right, major! I see you're in the right. I'll do it, I'll certainly do it. But then it hurts me to the soul, to think what uneasiness I shall give her. The first opening of my design will throw her into fits, and the pursuit of it perhaps may be fatal.

Maj. Fits! ha, ha, ha!—Fits!—I'll engage to cure her of her fits. Nobody understands hysterical cases better than I do: besides, my sister's symptoms are not very dangerous. Did you ever hear of her falling into a fit when you was not by!—Was she ever found in convulsions in her closet?—No, no, these fits, the more care you take of them, the more you will increase the distemper: let them alone, and they will wear themselves out, I warrant you.

Oak. True—very true—you're certainly in the right—I'll follow your advice. Where do you dine to-day? I'll order the coach, and go with you.

Maj. O brave! keep up this spirit, and you're made for ever.

Oak. You shall see now, major! Who's there?

Enter Servant.

Order the coach directly. I shall dine out to-day.

Serv. The coach, sir!—Now, sir?

Oak. Ay, now, immediately.

Serv. Now, sir?—the—the—coach! Sir!—that is——my mistress——

Oak. Sirrah! do as you're bid. Bid them put to this instant.

Serv. Ye——yes, sir——yes, sir. [*Exit.*

Oak. Well, where shall we dine?

Maj. At the St Alban's, or where you will. This is excellent, if you do but hold it.

Oak. I will have my own way, I am determined.

Maj. That's right.

Oak. I am steel.

Maj. Bravo!

Oak. Adamant.

Maj. Bravissimo!

Oak. Just what you'd have me.

Maj. Why that's well said. But will you do it?

Oak. I will.

Maj. You won't.

Oak. I will. I'll be a fool to her no longer. But hark ye, major! my hat and sword lie in my study. I'll go and steal them out, while she is busy talking with Charles.

Maj. Steal them! for shame! Pr'ythee take them boldly, call for them, make them bring them to you here, and go out with spirit, in the face of your whole family.

Oak. No, no—you are wrong—let her rave after I am gone, and when I return, you know, I shall exert myself with more propriety, after this open affront to her authority.

Maj. Well, take your own way.

Oak. Ay, ay——let me manage it, let me manage it. [*Exit.*

Maj. Manage it! ay, to be sure, you're a rare manager! It is dangerous, they say, to meddle between man and wife. I am no great favourite of Mrs Oakly's already; and in a week's time I expect to have the door shut in my teeth.

Enter CHARLES.

How now, Charles, what news?

Char. Ruin'd and undone! she's gone, uncle! my Harriot's lost for ever.

Maj. Gone off with a man?—I thought so: they are all alike.

Char. O no! Fled to avoid that hateful match with Sir Harry Beagle.

Maj. Faith, a girl of spirit!—Joy! Charles, I give you joy; she is your own, my boy!—A fool and a great estate! devilish strong temptations!

Char. A wretch! I was sure she would never think of him.

Maj. No! to be sure! commend me to your modesty! Refuse five thousand a year, and a baronet, for pretty Mr Charles Oakly! It is true, indeed, that the looby has not a single idea in his head besides a hound, a hunter, a five-barred gate, and a horse-race; but then he's rich, and that will qualify his absurdities. Money is a wonderful improver of the understanding.—— But whence comes all this intelligence?

Char. In an angry letter from her father.—— How miserable I am! If I had not offended my Harriot, much offended her by that foolish riot and drinking at your house in the country, she would certainly, at such a time, have taken refuge in my arms.

Maj. A very agreeable refuge for a young lady to be sure, and extremely decent!

Char. I am all uneasiness. Did not she tell me, that she trembled at the thoughts of having trusted her affections with a man of such a wild disposition? What a heap of extravagancies was I guilty of!

Maj. Extravagancies with a witness! Ah, you silly young dog, you would ruin yourself with her father, in spite of all I could do. There you sat, as drunk as a lord, telling the old gentleman the whole affair, and swearing you would drive Sir Harry Beagle out of the country, though I kept winking and nodding, pulling you by the sleeve, and kicking your shins under the table, in hopes of stopping you, but all to no purpose.

Char. What distress may she be in at this instant! Alone and defenceless!—Where? where can she be?

Maj. What relations or friends has she in town?

Char. Relations! let me see:—Faith! I have it.—If she is in town, ten to one but she is at her aunt's, Lady Freelove's. I'll go thither immediately.

Maj. Lady Freelove's! Hold, hold, Charles! ——do you know her ladyship?

Char. Not much; but I'll break through all forms to get my Harriot.

Maj. I do know her ladyship.

Char. Well, and what do you know of her?

Maj. O nothing!——Her ladyship is a woman of the world, that's all——she'll introduce Harriot to the best company.

Char. What do you mean?

Maj. Yes, yes, I would trust a wife, or a daughter, or a mistress with Lady Freelove, to be sure! —I'll tell you what, Charles! you're a good boy, but you don't know the world. Women are fifty times oftener ruined by their acquaintance with each other, than by their attachment to men. One thorough-paced lady will train up a thousand novices. That Lady Freelove is an arrant—— By the bye, did not she, last summer, make formal proposals to Harriot's father from Lord Trinket?

Char. Yes! but they were received with the utmost contempt. The old gentleman, it seems, hates a lord, and he told her so in plain terms.

Maj. Such an aversion to the nobility may not run in the blood. The girl, I warrant you, has no objection. However, if she's there, watch her narrowly, Charles! Lady Freelove is as mischievous as a monkey, and as cunning too.—Have a care of her. I say, have a care of her.

Char. If she's there, I'll have her out of the house within this half hour, or set fire to it.

Maj. Nay, now you're too violent.——Stay a moment, and we'll consider what's best to be done.

Re-enter OAKLY.

Oak. Come, is the coach ready? Let us be gone. Does Charles go with us?

Char. I go with you!——What can I do? I am so vext and distracted, and so many thoughts crowd in upon me, I don't know which way to turn myself.

Mrs Oak. [*Within.*]. The coach!—dines out! ——where is your master?

Oak. Zounds! brother, here she is!

Enter Mrs OAKLY.

Mrs Oak. Pray, Mr Oakly, what is the matter you cannot dine at home to-day?

Oak. Don't be uneasy, my dear!——I have a little business to settle with my brother; so I am only just going to dinner with him and Charles to the tavern.

Mrs Oak. Why cannot you settle your business here as well as at a tavern? But it is some of your *ladies'* business, I suppose, and so you must get rid of my company.——This is chiefly your fault, Major Oakly!

Maj. Lord! sister, what signifies it, whether a man dines at home or abroad? [*Coolly.*

Mrs Oak. It signifies a great deal, sir! and I don't choose———

Maj. Phoo! let him go, my dear sister, let him go! he will be ten times better company when he comes back. I tell you what, sister—you sit at home till you are quite tired of one another, and then you grow cross, and fall out. If you would but part a little now and then, you might meet again in good humour.

Mrs Oak. I beg, Major Oakly, that you would trouble yourself about your own affairs; and let me tell you, sir, that I——

Oak. Nay, do not put thyself into a passion with the Major, my dear!—It is not his fault; and I shall come back to thee very soon.

Mrs Oak. Come back!——why need you go out?—I know well enough when you mean to deceive me: for then there is always a pretence of dining with Sir John, or my Lord, or somebody; but when you tell me, that you are going to a tavern, it's such a bare-faced affront——

Oak. This is so strange now!——Why, my dear, I shall only just——

Mrs Oak. Only just go after the lady in the letter, I suppose.

Oak. Well, well, I won't go then.—Will that convince you?—I'll stay with you, my dear!—will that satisfy you?

Maj. For shame! hold out, if you are a man. [*Apart.*

Oak. She has been so much vext this morning already, I must humour her a little now. [*Apart.*

Maj. Fie, fie! go out, or you're undone.

Oak. You see it's impossible—— [*Apart.* [*To Mrs* OAKLY.] I'll dine at home with thee, my love.

Mrs Oak. Ay, ay, pray do, sir.——Dine at a tavern indeed! [*Going.*

Oak. [*Returning.*] You may depend on me another time, Major.

Maj. Steel and adamant!——Ah!

Mrs Oak. [*Returning.*] Mr Oakly!

Oak. O, my dear!

[*Exeunt Mr and Mrs* OAKLY.

Maj. Ha, ha, ha! there's a picture of resolution! there goes a philosopher for you! ha! Charles!

Char. O, uncle! I have no spirits to laugh now.

Maj. So! I have a fine time on't between you and my brother. Will you meet me to dinner at the St Alban's by four? We'll drink her health, and think of this affair.

Char. Don't depend on me. I shall be running all over the town in pursuit of my Harriot. I have been considering what you have said, but at all events I'll go directly to Lady Freelove's. If I find her not there, which way I shall direct myself, Heaven knows.

Maj. Hark'e, Charles! if you meet with her, you may be at a loss. Bring her to my house. I have a snug room, and——

Char. Phoo! pr'ythee, uncle, don't trifle with me now.

Maj. Well, seriously then, my house is at your service.

Char. I thank you: but I must be gone.

Maj. Ay, ay, bring her to my house, and we'll settle the whole affair for you. You shall clap her into a post-chaise, take the chaplain of our regiment along with you, wheel her down to Scotland, and when you come back, send to settle her fortune with her father: that's the modern art of making love, Charles! [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Room in the Bull and Gate Inn.*

Enter Sir HARRY BEAGLE *and* TOM.

Sir Har. Ten guineas a mare, and a crown the man, hey, Tom?

Tom. Yes, your honour.

Sir H. And are you sure, Tom, that there is no flaw in his blood?

Tom. He's a good thing, sir, and as little beholden to the ground, as any horse that ever went over the turf upon four legs. Why, here's his whole pedigree, your honour!

Sir H. Is it attested?

Tom. Very well attested. it is signed by Jack Spur and my Lord Startall.

[*Giving the pedigree.*

Sir H. Let me see.—[*Reading.*]—"Tom-come-tickle-me was out of the famous Tantwivy mare, by Sir Aaron Driver's chesnut horse White Stock-

ings. White Stockings his dam was got by Lord Hedge's South Barb, full sister to the Proserpine Filly, and his sire Tom Jones; his grandam was the Irish Duchess, and his grandsire 'Squire Sportly's Trajan; his great grandam, and great great grandam, were Newmarket Peggy and Black Moll, and his great grandsire, and great, great grandsire, were Sir Ralph Whip's Regulus, and the famous Prince Anamaboo. his
JOHN X SPUR,
mark.
STARTAL."

Tom. All fine horses, and won every thing! a foal out of your honour's Bald-faced Venus, by this horse, would beat the world.

Sir H. Well then, we'll think on't.——But, pox on't, Tom, I have certainly knock'd up my little roan gelding, in this damn'd wild-goose chase of threescore miles an end.

Tom. He's deadly blown to be sure, your honour; and I am afraid we are upon a wrong scent after all. Madam Harriot certainly took across the country, instead of coming on to London.

Sir H. No, no, we traced her all the way up.—But, d'ye hear, Tom, look out among the stables and repositories here in town, for a smart road nag, and a strong horse to carry a portmanteau.

Tom. Sir Roger Turf's horses are to be sold—I'll see if there's ever a tight thing there——but I suppose, sir, you would have one somewhat stronger than Snip——I don't think he's quite enough of a horse for your honour.

Sir H. Not enough of a horse! Snip's a powerful gelding: master of two stone more than my weight. If Snip stands sound, I would not take a hundred guineas for him. Poor Snip! go into the stable, Tom, see they give him a warm mash, and look at his heels and his eyes. But where's Mr Russet all this while?

Tom. I left the 'squire at breakfast on a cold pigeon-pye, and enquiring after madam Harriot in the kitchen. I'll let him know your honour would be glad to see him here.

Sir H. Ay, do: but hark'e, Tom, be sure you take care of Snip.

Tom. I'll warrant your honour.

Sir H. I'll be down in the stables myself by and by. [*Exit* TOM.] Let me see——out of the famous Tantwivy by White Stockings; White Stockings his dam, full sister to the Proserpine Filly, and his sire—Pox on't, how unlucky it is, that this damn'd accident should happen in the Newmarket week!——ten to one I lose my match with Lord Choakjade, by not riding myself, and I shall have no opportunity to hedge my betts neither——what a damn'd piece of work have I made on't—I have knock'd up poor Snip, shall lose my match, and as to Harriot, why, the odds are, that I lose my match there too——a skittish young tit! If I once get her tight in hand, I'll make her wince for it. Her estate, join'd to my own, I would have the finest stud, and the noblest kennel, in the whole country.——But here comes her father, puffing and blowing, like a broken-winded horse up hill.

Enter RUSSET.

Rus. Well, Sir Harry, have you heard any thing of her?

Sir H. Yes, I have been asking Tom about her, and he says, you may have her for five hundred guineas.

Rus. Five hundred guineas! how d'ye mean? where is she? which way did she take?

Sir H. Why, first she went to Epsom, then to Lincoln, then to Nottingham, and now she is at York.

Rus. Impossible! she could not go over half the ground in the time. What the devil are you talking of?

Sir H. Of the mare you was just now saying you wanted to buy.

Rus. The devil take the mare!——who would think of her, when I am mad about an affair of so much more consequence?

Sir H. You seemed mad about her a little while ago. She's a fine mare, and a thing of shape and blood.

Rus. Damn her blood!——Harriot! my dear provoking Harriot! Where can she be! Have you got any intelligence of her?

Sir H. No, faith, not I: we seem to be quite thrown out here—but however I have ordered Tom to try if he can hear any thing of her among the ostlers.

Rus. Why don't you enquire after her yourself? why don't you run up and down the whole town after her?——t'other young rascal knows where she is, I warrant you.——What a plague it is to have a daughter! When one loves her to distraction, and has toil'd and labour'd to make her happy, the ungrateful slut will sooner go to hell her own way—but she shall have him—I will make her happy, if I break her heart for it.—A provoking gipsy!—to run away, and torment her poor father, that dotes on her! I'll never see her face again.—Sir Harry, how can we get any intelligence of her? Why don't you speak! why don't you tell me!——Zounds! you seem as indifferent as if you did not care a farthing about her.

Sir H. Indifferent! you may well call me indifferent!——this damn'd chase after her will cost me a thousand——if it had not been for her, I would not have been off the course this week, to have saved the lives of my whole family——I'll hold you six to two that——

Rus. Zounds! hold your tongue, or talk more to the purpose——I swear, she is too good for you—you don't deserve such a wife—a fine, dear, sweet, lovely, charming girl!—She'll break my heart.—How shall I find her out!——Do, pr'ythee, Sir Harry, my dear honest friend, consider how we may discover where she is fled to.

Sir H. Suppose you put an advertisement into the newspapers, describing her marks, her age,

her height, and where she strayed from. I recover'd a bay mare once by that method.

Rus. Advertise her!—What! describe my daughter and expose her in the public papers, with a reward for bringing her home, like horses stolen or stray'd!——recovered a bay mare——the devil's in the fellow!——he thinks of nothing but racers, and bay mares, and stallions.——'Sdeath! I wish your——

Sir H. I wish Harriot was fairly pounded; it would save us both a deal of trouble.

Rus. Which way shall I turn myself?——I am half distracted.——If I go to that young dog's house, he has certainly conveyed her somewhere out of my reach——if she does not send to me to-day, I'll give her up for ever——perhaps though she may have met with some accident, and has nobody to assist her.—No, she is certainly with that young rascal.—I wish she was dead, and I was dead——I'll blow young Oakly's brains out.

Enter TOM.

Sir H. Well, Tom, how is poor Snip?

Tom. A little better, sir, after his warm mash: but Lady, the pointing bitch that followed you all the way, is deadly foot-sore.

Rus. Damn Snip and Lady!—have you heard any thing of Harriot?

Tom. Why I came on purpose to let my master and your honour know, that John Ostler says as how, just such a lady as I told him madam Harriot was, came here in a four-wheel chaise, and was fetch'd away soon after by a fine lady in a chariot.

Rus. Did she come alone?

Tom. Quite alone, only a servant maid, please your honour.

Rus. And what part of the town did they go to?

Tom. John Ostler says as how they bid the coachman drive to Grosvenor-square.

Sir H. Soho! puss—— Yoics!

Rus. She is certainly gone to that young rogue——he has got his aunt to fetch her from hence, or else she is with her own aunt Lady Freelove——they both live in that part of the town. I'll go to his house, and in the mean while, Sir Harry, you shall step to Lady Freelove's. We'll find her, I warrant you. I'll teach my young mistress to be gadding. She shall marry you to-night. Come along, Sir Harry, come along; we won't lose a minute. Come along.

Sir H. Soho! hark forward! wind 'em and cross 'em! hark forward! Yoics! Yoics!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* OAKLY'S.

Enter Mrs OAKLY.

Mrs Oak. After all, that letter was certainly intended for my husband. I see plain enough they are all in a plot against me. My husband intriguing, the major working him up to affront me, Charles owning his letters, and so playing into each other's hands.——They think me a fool, I find——but I'll be too much for them yet——I have desired to speak with Mr Oakly, and expect him here immediately. His temper is naturally open, and if he thinks my anger abated, and my suspicions laid asleep, he will certainly betray himself by his behaviour. I'll assume an air of good-humour, pretend to believe the fine story they have trumped up, throw him off his guard, and so draw the secret out of him.—Here he comes.—How hard it is to dissemble one's anger! O, I could rate him soundly! but I'll keep down my indignation at present, though it chokes me.

Enter OAKLY.

O my dear! I am very glad to see you. Pray sit down. [*They sit.*] I longed to see you. It seemed an age till I had an opportunity of talking over the silly affair that happened this morning.

[*Mildly.*

Oak. Why really, my dear——

Mrs Oak. Nay don't look so grave now. Come—it's all over. Charles and you have cleared up matters. I am satisfied.

Oak. Indeed! I rejoice to hear it! You make me happy beyond my expectation. This disposition will insure our felicity. Do but lay aside your cruel unjust suspicion, and we should never have the least difference.

Mrs Oak. Indeed I begin to think so. I'll endeavour to get the better of it. And really sometimes it is very ridiculous. My uneasiness this morning, for instance! ha, ha, ha! To be so much alarmed about that idle letter, which turned out quite another thing at last—was not I very angry with you? ha, ha, ha!

[*Affecting a laugh.*

Oak. Don't mention it. Let us both forget it. Your present cheerfulness makes amends for every thing.

Mrs Oak. I am apt to be too violent: I love you too well to be quite easy about you. [*Fondly.*] —Well—no matter—what is become of Charles?

Oak. Poor fellow! he's on the wing, rambling all over the town in pursuit of this young lady.

Mrs Oak. Where is he gone, pray?

Oak. First of all, I believe, to some of her relations.

Mrs Oak. Relations! Who are they? Where do they live?

Oak. There is an aunt of her's lives just in the neighbourhood, Lady Freelove.

Mrs Oak. Lady Freelove! Oho! gone to Lady Freelove's, is he?—and do you think he will hear any thing of her?

Oak. I don't know; but I hope so with all my soul.

Mrs Oak. Hope! with all your soul; do you hope so? [*Alarmed.*

Oak. Hope so! ye—yes—why, don't you hope so? [*Surprised.*

Mrs Oak. Well—yes—[*Recovering*]—O ay, to be sure. I hope it of all things. You know, my dear, it must give me great satisfaction, as well as yourself, to see Charles well settled.

Oak. I should think so; and really I don't

know where he can be settled so well. She is a most deserving young woman, I assure you.

Mrs Oak. Youare well acquainted with her then?

Oak. To be sure, my dear! after seeing her so often last summer at the Major's house in the country, and at her father's.

Mrs Oak. So often!

Oak. O ay, very often—Charles took care of that—almost every day.

Mrs Oak. Indeed! But pray—a—a—a—I say—a—a— [*Confused.*

Oak. What do you say, my dear?

Mrs Oak. I say—a—a—[*Stammering.*] Is she handsome?

Oak. Prodigiously handsome indeed.

Mrs Oak. Prodigiously handsome! and is she reckoned a sensible girl?

Oak. A very sensible, modest, agreeable young lady as ever I knew. You would be extremely fond of her, I am sure. You cann't imagine how happy I was in her company. Poor Charles! she soon made a conquest of him, and no wonder, she has so many elegant accomplishments! such an infinite fund of cheerfulness and good humour! Why, she's the darling of the whole country.

Mrs Oak. Lord! you seem quite in raptures about her.

Oak. Raptures!—not at all. I was only telling you the young lady's character. I thought you would be glad to find that Charles had made so sensible a choice, and was so likely to be happy.

Mrs Oak. O, Charles! True, as you say, Charles will be mighty happy.

Oak. Don't you think so?

Mrs Oak. I am convinced of it. Poor Charles! I am much concerned for him. He must be very uneasy about her. I was thinking whether we could be of any service to him in this affair.

Oak. Was you, my love? that is very good of you. Why to be sure, we must endeavour to assist him. Let me see; how can we manage it? Gad! I have hit it. The luckiest thought! and it will be of great service to Charles.

Mrs Oak. Well, what is it? [*Eagerly.*]—You know I would do any thing to serve Charles, and oblige you. [*Mildly.*

Oak. That is so kind! Lord, my dear, if you would but always consider things in this proper light, and continue this amiable temper, we should be the happiest people———

Mrs Oak. I believe so: but what's your proposal?

Oak. I am sure you'll like it.—Charles, you know, may perhaps be so lucky as to meet with this lady——

Mrs Oak. True.

Oak. Now I was thinking, that he might, with your leave, my dear——

Mrs Oak. Well!

Oak. Bring her home here.

Mrs Oak. How?

Oak. Yes, bring her home here, my dear!—it will make poor Charles's mind quite easy: and you may take her under your protection till her father comes to town.

Mrs Oak. Amazing! this is even beyond my expectation.

Oak. Why!——what!——

Mrs Oak. Was there ever such assurance! Take her under my protection! What! would you keep her under my nose?

Oak. Nay, I never conceived—I thought you would have approved——

Mrs Oak. What! make me your convenient woman?——No place but my own house to serve your purposes?

Oak. Lord, this is the strangest misapprehension! I am quite astonished.

Mrs Oak. Astonished! yes——confused, detected, betrayed by your vain confidence of imposing on me. Why, sure you imagine me an idiot, a driveller. Charles, indeed! yes, Charles is a fine excuse for you. The letter this morning, the letter, Mr Oakly!

Oak. The letter! why, sure that———

Mrs Oak. Is sufficiently explained. You have made it very clear to me. Now I am convinced. I have no doubt of your perfidy. But I thank you for some hints you have given me, and you may be sure I shall make use of them: nor will I rest, till I have full conviction, and overwhelm you with the strongest proof of your baseness towards me.

Oak. Nay, but———

Mrs Oak. Go, go! I have no doubt of your falsehood: away! [*Exit Mrs* OAKLY.

Oak. Was there ever any thing like this? Such unaccountable behaviour! angry I don't know why! jealous of I know not what! pretending to be satisfied merely to draw me in, and then creating imaginary proofs out of an innocent conversation!——Hints!——hints I have given her!—What can she mean?———

TOILET *crossing the Stage.*

Toilet! where are you going?

Toilet. To order the porter to let in no company to my lady to-day. She won't see a single soul, sir. [*Exit.*

Oak. What an unhappy woman! Now will she sit all day feeding on her suspicions, till she has convinced herself of the truth of them.

JOHN *crossing the stage.*

Well, sir, what's your business?

John. Going to order the chariot, sir!—my lady's going out immediately. [*Exit.*

Oak. Going out! what is all this?—But every way she makes me miserable. Wild and ungovernable as the sea or the wind! made up of storms and tempests! I cann't bear it: and, one way or other, I will put an end to it. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Lady* FREELOVE'S *House.*

Enter Lady FREELOVE *with a card—Servant following.*

L. Free. [*Reading as she enters.*]—"And will

take the liberty of waiting on her ladyship *en cavalier*, as he comes from the menége." Does any body wait that brought this card?

Ser. Lord Trinket's servant is in the hall, madam.

L. Free. My compliments, and I shall be glad to see his lordship.—Where is Miss Russet?

Serv. In her own chamber, madam.

L. Free. What is she doing?

Serv. Writing, I believe, madam.

L. Free. Oh! ridiculous!—scribbling to that Oakly, I suppose. [*Apart.*]—Let her know I should be glad of her company here. [*Exit Servant.*

L. Free. It is a mighty troublesome thing to manage a simple girl, that knows nothing of the world. Harriot, like all other girls, is foolishly fond of this young fellow of her own choosing, her first love; that is to say, the first man that is particularly civil, and the first air of consequence which a young lady gives herself. Poor silly soul! —But Oakly must not have her positively. A match with Lord Trinket will add to the dignity of the family. I must bring her into it. I will throw her into his way as often as possible, and leave him to make his party good as fast as he can. But here she comes.

Enter HARRIOT.

Well, Harriot, still in the pouts! nay, pr'ythee, my dear little run-away girl, be more cheerful! your everlasting melancholy puts me into the vapours.

Har. Dear madam, excuse me. How can I be cheerful in my present situation? I know my father's temper so well, that I am sure this step of mine must almost distract him. I sometimes wish that I had remained in the country, let what would have been the consequence.

L. Free. Why, it is a naughty child, that's certain; but it need not be so uneasy about papa, as you know that I wrote by last night's post to acquaint him that his little lost sheep was safe, and that you are ready to obey his commands in every particular, except marrying that oaf, Sir Harry Beagle.——Lord! Lord! what a difference there is between a country and town education! Why, a London lass would have jumped out of a window into a gallant's arms, and without thinking of her father, unless it were to have drawn a few bills on him, been an hundred miles off, in nine or ten hours, or perhaps out of the kingdom in twenty-four.

Har. I fear I have already been too precipitate. I tremble for the consequences.

L. Free. I swear, child, you are a downright prude. Your way of talking gives me the spleen; so full of affection, and duty, and virtue, 'tis just like a funeral sermon. And yet, pretty soul! it can love.—Well, I wonder at your taste; a sneaking simple gentleman! without a title! and when, to my knowledge, you might have a man of quality to-morrow.

Har. Perhaps so. Your ladyship must excuse me, but many a man of quality would make me miserable.

L. Free. Indeed, my dear, these antediluvian notions will never do now-a-days; and at the same time too, those little wicked eyes of yours speak a very different language. Indeed you have fine eyes, child! And they have made fine work with Lord Trinket.

Har. Lord Trinket! [*Contemptuously.*

L. Free. Yes, Lord Trinket: you know it as well as I do, and yet, you ill-natured thing, you will not vouchsafe him a single smile. But you must give the poor soul a little encouragement, pr'ythee do.

Har. Indeed I cann't, madam, for of all mankind Lord Trinket is my aversion.

L. Free. Why so, child? He is counted a well-bred, sensible young fellow, and the women all think him handsome.

Har. Yes, he is just polite enough to be able to be very unmannerly with a great deal of good breeding; is just handsome enough to make him most excessively vain of his person; and has just reflection enough to finish him for a coxcomb; qualifications, which are all very common among those whom your ladyship calls men of quality.

L. Free. A satirist too! Indeed, my dear, this affectation sits very awkwardly upon you. There will be a superiority in the behaviour of persons of fashion.

Har. A superiority, indeed! For his lordship always behaves with so much insolent familiarity, that I should almost imagine he was soliciting me for other favours, rather than to pass my whole life with him.

L. Free. Innocent freedoms, child, which every fine woman expects to be taken with her, as an acknowledgment of her beauty.

Har. They are freedoms, which, I think, no innocent woman can allow.

L. Free. Romantic to the last degree!—Why, you are in the country still, Harriot.

Enter Servant.

Serv. My Lord Trinket, madam. [*Exit Servant.*

L. Free. I swear now I have a good mind to tell him all you have said.

Enter Lord TRINKET *in boots, &c. as from the Riding-House.*

Your lordship's most obedient humble servant.

L. Trink. Your ladyship does me too much honour. Here I am *en bottine* as you see,—just come from the menége. Miss Russet, I am your slave. I declare it makes me quite happy to find you together. 'Pon honour, ma'am, [*To* HARRIOT.] I begin to conceive great hopes of you: and as for you, Lady Freelove, I cannot sufficiently commend your assiduity with your fair pupil. She was before possessed of every grace that nature could bestow on her, and nobody is so well qualified as your ladyship to give her the *bon ton.*

Har. Compliment and contempt all in a breath! My lord, I am obliged to you. But, waving my acknowledgments, give me leave to ask your lordship, whether nature and the *Bon Ton* (as you call

it) are so different, that we must give up one in order to obtain the other?

L. Trink. Totally opposite, madam. The chief aim of the *bon ton* is to render persons of family different from the vulgar, for whom indeed nature serves very well. For this reason it has, at various times, been ungenteel to see, to hear, to walk, to be in good health, and to have twenty other horrible perfections of nature. Nature indeed may do very well sometimes. It made you, for instance, and it then made something very lovely; and if you would suffer us of quality to give you the *ton*, you would be absolutely divine: but now—me—madam—me——nature never made such a thing as me.

Har. Why, indeed, I think your lordship has very few obligations to her.

L. Trink. Then you really think it's all my own? I declare now that is a mighty genteel compliment. Nay, if you begin to flatter already, you improve apace. 'Pon honour, Lady Freelove, I believe we shall make something of her at last.

L. Free. No doubt on't. It is in your lordship's power to make her a complete woman of fashion at once.

L Trink. Hum! Why, ay——

Har. Your lordship must excuse me. I am of a very tasteless disposition. I shall never bear to be carried out of nature.

L. Free. You are out of nature now, Harriot! I am sure no woman but yourself ever objected to being carried among persons of quality. Would you believe it, my lord? here has she been a whole week in town, and would never suffer me to introduce her to a rout, an assembly, a concert or even to court, or to the opera; nay, would hardly so much as mix with a living soul that has visited me.

L. Trink. No wonder, madam, you do not adopt the manners of persons of fashion, when you will not even honour them with your company. Were you to make one in our little coteries, we should soon make you sick of the boors and bumpkins of the horrid country. By the bye, I met a monster at the riding-house this morning, who gave me some intelligence, that will surprise you concerning your family.

Har. What intelligence?

L. Free. Who was this monster, as your lordship calls him? A curiosity, I dare say.

L. Trink. This monster, madam, was formerly my head groom, and had the care of all my running horses, but, growing most abominably surly and extravagant, as you know all these fellows do, I turned him off; and ever since, my brother, Slouch Trinket, has had the care of my stud, rides all my principal matches himself, and——

Har. Dear, my lord, don't talk of your groom and your brother, but tell me the news. Do you know any thing of my father?

L. Trink. Your father, madam, is now in town. This fellow, you must know, is now groom to Sir Harry Beagle, your sweet rural swain, and informed me, that his master and your father were running all over the town in quest of you; and that he himself had orders to enquire after you; for which reason, I suppose, he came to the riding-house stables, to look after a horse, thinking it, to be sure, a very likely place to meet you. Your father, perhaps, is gone to seek you at the Tower, or Westminster-Abbey, which is all the idea he has of London; and your faithful lover is probably cheapening a hunter, and drinking strong beer at the Horse and Jockey in Smithfield.

L. Free. The whole set admirably disposed of!

Har. Did not your lordship inform him where I was?

L. Trink. Not I, 'pon honour, madam: that I left to their own ingenuity to discover.

L. Free. And pray, my lord, where in this town have this polite company bestowed themselves?

L. Trink. They lodge, madam, of all places in the world, at the Bull and Gate-Inn, in Holborn.

L. Free. Ha, ha, ha! The Bull and Gate! Incomparable! What, have they brought any hay or cattle to town?

L. Trink. Very well, Lady Freelove, very well, indeed!—There they are, like so many graziers; and there, it seems, they have learned that this lady is certainly in London.

Har. Do, dear madam, send a card directly to my father, informing him where I am, and that your ladyship would be glad to see him here. For my part, I dare not venture into his presence till you have, in some measure, pacified him; but, for Heaven's sake, desire him not to bring that wretched fellow along with him.

L. Trink. Wretched fellow! Oho! Courage, Milor Trinket! [*Aside.*

L. Free. I'll send immediately. Who's there?

Enter Servant.

Serv. [*Apart to L.* FREELOVE.] Sir Harry Beagle is below, madam.

L. Free. [*Apart to Serv.*] I am not at home. ——Have they let him in.

Serv. Yes, madam.

L. Free. How abominably unlucky this is! Well, then shew him into my dressing-room. I will come to him there. [*Exit Serv.*

L. Trink. Lady Freelove! No engagement, I hope. We won't part with you, 'pon honour.

L. Free. The worst engagement in the world. A pair of musty old prudes! Lady Formal and Miss Prate.

L. Trink. O the beldams! As nauseous as ipecacuanha, 'pon honour.

L. Free. Lud! lud! what shall I do with them? Why do these foolish women come troubling me now? I must wait on them in the dressing-room, and you must excuse the card, Harriot, till they are gone. I'll dispatch them as soon as I can, but Heaven knows when I shall get rid of them, for they are both everlasting gossips; though the words come from her ladyship one by one, like drops from a still, while the other tiresome woman overwhelms us with a flood of impertinence. Harriot, you'll entertain his lordship till I return. [*Exit.*

L. Trink. Gone!—'Egad, my affairs here be-

gin to grow very critical,—the father in town!—lover in town!—Surrounded by enemies!——What shall I do? [*To* HARRIOT.] I have nothing for it but a *coup de main*. 'Pon honour I am not sorry for the coming in of these old tabbies, and am much obliged to her ladyship for leaving us such an agreeable tête-a-tête.

Har. Your lordship will find me extremely bad company.

L. Trink. Not in the least, my dear! We'll entertain ourselves one way or other, I'll warrant you.—'Egad, I think it a mighty good opportunity to establish a better acquaintance with you.

Har. I don't understand you.

L. Trink. No!——Why then I'll speak plainer.—[*Pausing, and looking her full in the face.*] You are an amazing fine creature, 'pon honour.

Har. If this be your lordship's polite conversation, I shall leave you to amuse yourself in soliloquy. [*Going.*

L. Trink. No, no, no, madam, that must not be. [*Stopping her.*] This place, my passion, the opportunity, all conspire——

Har. How, sir! you don't intend to do me any violence?

L. Trink. 'Pon honour, ma'am, it will be doing great violence to myself if I do not. You must excuse me. [*Struggling with her.*

Har. Help! help! murder! help!

L. Trink. Your yelping will signify nothing; nobody will come. [*Struggling.*

Har. For Heaven's sake!——Sir! My lord!—[*Noise within.*

L. Trink. Pox on't, what noise?——Then I must be quick. [*Still struggling.*

Har. Help! murder! help! help!

Enter CHARLES, *hastily.*

Char. What do I hear? My Harriot's voice calling for help? Ha [*Seeing them.*] Is it possible? Turn, ruffian!—I'll find you employment. [*Drawing.*

L. Trink. You are a most impertinent scoundrel, and I'll whip you through the lungs, 'pon honour. [*They fight,* HARRIOT *runs out screaming help! &c.*

Enter Lady FREELOVE, *Sir* HARRY BEAGLE, *and Servants.*

L. Free. How's this?—Swords drawn in my house!—Part them——[*They are parted*] This is the most impudent thing—

L. Trink. Well, rascal, I shall find a time. I know you, sir!

Char. The sooner the better, I know your lordship too.

Sir H. I'faith, madam, [*To L.* FREE.] we had like to have been in at the death.

L. Free. What is all this? Pray, sir, what is the meaning of your coming hither to raise this disturbance? Do you take my house for a brothel? [*To* CHARLES.

Char. Not I, indeed, madam! but I believe his lordship does.

L. Trink. Impudent scoundrel!

L. Free. Your conversation, sir, is as insolent as your behaviour. Who are you, what brought you here?

Char. I am one, madam, always ready to draw my sword in defence of innocence in distress, and more especially in the cause of that lady I delivered from his lordship's fury; in search of whom I troubled your ladyship's house.

L. Free. Her lover, I suppose, or what?

Char. At your ladyship's service; though not quite so violent in my passion as his lordship there.

L. Trink. Impertinent rascal!

L. Free. You shall be made to repent of this insolence.

L. Trink. Your ladyship may leave that to me.

Char. Ha! ha!

Sir H. But pray what is become of the lady all this while? Why, Lady Freelove, you told me she was not here, and, i'faith, I was just drawing off another way, if I had not heard the view-halloo.

L. Free. You shall see her immediately, sir. Who's there?

Enter a Servant.

Where is Miss Russet?

Serv. Gone out, madam.

L. Free. Gone out! where?

Serv. I don't know, madam: but she ran down the back-stairs crying for help, crossed the servants' hall in tears, and took a chair at the door.

L. Free. Blockheads! to let her go out in a chair alone!——Go, and enquire after her immediately. [*Exit Servant.*

Sir H. Gone! What a pox, had I just run her down, and is the little puss stole away at last?

L. Free. Sir, if you will walk in [*To Sir* HAR.] with his lordship and me, perhaps you may hear some tidings of her; though it is most probable she may be gone to her father. I don't know any other friend she has in town.

Char. I am heartily glad she is gone. She is safer any where than in this house.

L. Free. Mighty well, sir!——My lord! Sir Harry!——I attend you.

L. Trink. You shall hear from me, sir! [*To* CHARLES.

Char. Very well, my lord.

Sir H. Stole away!—Pox on't—stole away. [*Exeunt Sir* H. *and Lord* TRINK.

L. Free. Before I follow the company, give me leave to tell you, sir, that your behaviour here has been so extraordinary——

Char. My treatment here, madam, has indeed been very extraordinary.

L. Free. Indeed!—Well—no matter—permit me to acquaint you, sir, that there lies your way out, and that the greatest favour you can do me, is to leave the house immediately.

Char. That your ladyship may depend on.—Since you have put Miss Russet to flight, you may be sure of not being troubled with my company. I'll after her immediately—I cann't rest till I know what is become of her.

L. Free. If she has any regard for her reputa-

tion, she'll never put herself into such hands as yours.

Char. O, madam, there can be no doubt of her regard for that, by her leaving your ladyship.

L. Free. Leave my house!

Char. Directly.——A charming house! and a charming lady of the house too! Ha, ha, ha!

L. Free. Vulgar fellow!

Char. Fine lady! [*Exeunt severally.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Lady* FREELOVE'S *House.*

Enter Lady FREELOVE, *and Lord* TRINKET.

L. Trink. Doucement, doucement, my dear Lady Freelove!—Excuse me! I meant no harm, 'pon honour.

L. Free. Indeed, indeed, my Lord Trinket, this is absolutely intolerable. What, to offer rudeness to a young lady in my house! What will the world say of it?

L. Trink. Just what the world pleases.——It does not signify a doit what they say.—However, I ask pardon; but, 'egad, I thought it was the best way.

L. Free. For shame, for shame, my lord! I am quite hurt at your want of discretion. Leave the whole conduct of this affair to me, or I'll have done with it at once. How strangely you have acted! There I went out of the way on purpose to serve you, by keeping off that looby Sir Harry Beagle, and preventing him or her father from seeing the girl, till we had some chance of managing her ourselves.—And then you chose to make a disturbance, and spoiled all.

L. Trink. Devil take Sir Harry and t'other scoundrel too!——That they should come driving hither just at so critical an instant!——And that the wild little thing should take wing, and fly away the Lord knows whither!

L. Free. Ay,——And there again you was indiscreet past redemption, to let her know that her father was in town, and where he was to be found too! For there, I am confident, she must be gone, as she is not acquainted with one creature in London.

L. Trink. Why, a father is in these cases the *pisaller*, I must confess. 'Pon honour, Lady Freelove, I can scarce believe this obstinate girl a relation of yours. Such narrow notions! I'll swear, there is less trouble in getting ten women of the *prémiere volée* than in conquering the scruples of a silly girl in that style of life.

L. Free. Come, come, my lord, a truce with your reflections on my niece! Let us consider what is best to be done.

L. Trink. E'en just what your ladyship thinks proper.—For my part, I am entirely *dérangée.*

L. Free. Will you submit to be governed by me then?

L. Trink. I'll be all obedience—your ladyship's slave, 'pon honour.

L. Free. Why then, as this is rather an ugly affair in regard to me, as well as your lordship, and may make some noise, I think it absolutely necessary, merely to save appearances, that you should wait on her father, palliate matters as well as you can, and make a formal repetition of your proposal of marriage.

L. Trink. Your ladyship is perfectly in the right.—You are quite *au fait* of the affair. It shall be done immediately, and then your reputation will be safe, and my conduct justified to all the world.—But should the old rustic continue as stubborn as his daughter, your ladyship, I hope, has no objections to my being a little *rusée*, for I must have her, 'pon honour.

L. Free. Not in the least.

L. Trink. Or if a good opportunity should offer, and the girl should be still untractable——

L. Free. Do what you will, I wash my hands of it. She's out of my care now, you know.—But you must beware of your rivals. One, you know, is in the house with her, and the other will lose no opportunities of getting to her.

L. Trink. As to the fighting gentleman, I shall cut out work for him in his own way. I'll send him a *petit billet* to-morrow morning, and then there can be no great difficulty in outwitting her bumkin father and the baronet.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Captain O'Cutter to wait on your ladyship.

L. Free. O the hideous fellow! The Irish sailor-man, for whom I prevailed on your lordship to get the post of regulating captain. I suppose he is come to load me with his odious thanks. I won't be troubled with him now.

L. Trink. Let him in, by all means. He is the best creature to laugh at in nature. He is a perfect sea-monster, and always looks and talks as if he was upon deck. Besides, a thought strikes me.———He may be of use.

L. Free. Well——send the creature up then. [*Exit Servant.*

But what fine thought is this?

L. Trink. A *coup de maitre*, 'pon honour! I intend—but hush! Here the porpus comes.

Enter Captain O'CUTTER.

L. Free. Captain, your humble servant! I am very glad to see you.

O'Cut. I am much oblaged to you, my lady! Upon my conscience, the wind favours me at all points. I had no sooner got under way to tank your ladyship, but I have borne down upon my no-

ble friend his lordship too. I hope your lordship's well?

L. Trink. Very well, I thank you, captain!—But you seem to be hurt in the service: what is the meaning of that patch over your right eye?

O'Cut. Some advanced wages from my new post, my lord! This pressing is hot work, though it entitles us to smart-money.

L. Free. And pray in what perilous adventure did you get that scar, captain?

O'Cut. Quite out of my element, indeed, my lady! I got it in an engagement by land. A day or two ago I spied three stout fellows, belonging to a merchant-man. They made down Wapping. I immediately gave my lads the signal to chase, and we bore down right upon them. They tacked, and lay to. We gave them a thundering broadside, which they resaved like men; and one of them made use of small arms, which carried off the weathermost corner of Ned Gage's hat; so I immediately stood in with him, and raked him, but resaved a wound on my starboard eye, from the stock of the pistol. However, we took them all, and they now lie under the hatches, with fifty more, a-board a tender off the Tower.

L. Trink. Well done, noble captain!——But however you will soon have better employment, for I think the next step to your present post, is commonly a ship.

O'Cut. The sooner the better, my lord! Honest Terence O'Cutter shall never flinch, I warrant you; and has had as much sea-sarvice as any man in the navy.

L. Trink. You may depend on my good offices, captain!—But in the mean time it is in your power to do me a favour.

O'Cut. A favour! my lord! your lordship does me honour. I would go round the world, from one end to the other, by day or by night, to sarve your lordship, or my good lady here.

L. Trink. Dear madam, the luckiest thought in nature! [*Apart to L.* FREE.]—The favour I have to ask of you, captain, need not carry you so far out of your way. The whole affair is, that there are a couple of impudent fellows at an inn in Holborn, who have affronted me, and you would oblige me infinitely, by pressing them into his majesty's service.

L. Free. Now I understand you.——Admirable! [*Apart to L.* TRINK.

O'Cut. With all my heart, my lord, and tank you too, fait. But, by the bye, I hope they are not housekeepers, or freemen of the city. There's the devil to pay in meddling with them. They boder one so about liberty, and property, and stuff. It was but t'other day that Jack Trowser was carried before my lord mayor, and lost about a twelvemonth's pay, for nothing at all—at all.

L. Trink. I'll take care you shall be brought into no trouble. These fellows were formerly my grooms. If you'll call on me in the morning, I'll go with you to the place.

O'Cut. I'll be with your lordship, and bring with me four or five as pretty boys as you'll wish to clap your two lucking eyes upon of a summer's day.

L. Trink. I am much obliged to you. But, captain, I have another little favour to beg of you.

O'Cut. Upon my shoul, and I'll do it.

L. Trink. What, before you know it?

O'Cut. Fore and aft, my lord!

L. Trink. A gentleman has offended me in a point of honour———

O'Cut. Cut his troat.

L. Trink. Will you carry him a letter from me?

O'Cut. Indeed and I will: and I'll take you in tow too, and you shall engage him yard-arm and yard-arm.

L. Trink. Why then, captain, you'll come a little earlier to-morrow morning than you proposed, that you may attend him with my billet, before you proceed on the other affair.

O'Cut. Never fear it, my lord!——Your sarvant!——My ladyship, your humble sarvant!

L. Free. Captain, yours! Pray give my service to my friend Mrs O'Cutter. How does she do?

O'Cut. I tank your ladyship's axing——The dear creature is purely right and well.

L. Trink. How many children have you, captain?

O'Cut. Four, and please your lordship, and another upon the stocks.

L. Trink. When it is launched, I hope to be at the christening. I'll stand godfather, captain.

O'Cut. Your lordship's very good.

L. Trink. Well, you'll come to-morrow.

O'Cut. O, I'll not fail, my lord! Little Terence O'Cutter never fails, fait, when a troat is to be cut. [*Exit.*

L. Free. Ha, ha, ha! But sure you don't intend to ship off both her father and her country lover for the Indies?

L. Trink. Oh no! only let them comtemplate the inside of a ship for a day or two.

L. Free. Well, but after all, my lord, this is a very bold undertaking. I don't think you'll be able to put it in practice.

L. Trink. Nothing so easy, 'pon honour. To press a gentleman—a man of quality—one of us—would not be so easy, I grant you. But these fellows, you know, have not half so decent an appearance as one of my footmen: and from their behaviour, conversation, and dress, it is very possible to mistake them for grooms and ostlers.

L Free. There may be something in that indeed. But what use do you propose to make of this stratagem?

L. Trink. Every use in nature. This artifice must at least take them out of the way for some time, and in the mean while, measures may be concerted to carry off the girl.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Mrs Oakly, madam, is at the door, in her chariot, and desires to have the honour of speaking to your ladyship, on particular business.

L. Trink. Mrs Oakly! what can that jealous-pated woman want with you?

L. Free. No matter what.—I hate her mortally.—Let her in. [*Exit Servant.*

L. Trink. What wind blows her hither?

L. Free. A wind that must blow us some good.

L. Trink. How!——I was amazed you chose to see her.

L. Free. How can you be so slow of apprehension?——She comes, you may be sure, on some occasion relating to this girl: in order to assist young Oakly, perhaps, to sooth me, and gain intelligence, and so forward the match; but I'll forbid the banns, I warrant you.———Whatever she wants, I'll draw some sweet mischief out of it.——But away! away!——I think I hear her—slip down the back-stairs——or, stay, now I think on't, go out this way—meet her—and be sure to make her a very respectful bow, as you go out.

L. Trink. Hush! here she is.

Enter Mrs OAKLY.

[*L.* TRINKET *bows, and exit.*]

Mrs Oak. I beg pardon for giving your ladyship this trouble.

L. Free. I am always glad of the honour of seeing Mrs Oakly.

Mrs Oak. There is a letter, madam, just come from the country, which has occasioned some alarm in our family. It comes from Mr Russet—

L. Free. Mr Russet!

Mrs Oak. Yes, from Mr Russet, madam! and is chiefly concerning his daughter. As she has the honour of being related to your ladyship, I took the liberty of waiting on you.

L. Free. She is indeed, as you say, madam, a relation of mine; but, after what has happened, I scarce know how to acknowledge her.

Mrs Oak. Has she been so much to blame then?

L. Free. So much, madam!——Only judge for yourself.——Though she had been so indiscreet, not to say indecent in her conduct, as to elope from her father, I was in hopes to have hush'd up that matter, for the honour of our family.——But she has run away from me too, madam!—went off in the most abrupt manner, not an hour ago.

Mrs Oak. You surprise me. Indeed her father, by his letter, seems apprehensive of the worst consequences.—But does your ladyship imagine any harm has happened?

L. Free. I can't tell——I hope not——But indeed she is a strange girl. You know, madam, young women cann't be too cautious in their conduct. She is, I am sorry to declare it, a very dangerous person to take into a family.

Mrs Oak. Indeed! [*Alarmed.*

L. Free. If I was to say all I know!——

Mrs Oak. Why, sure, your ladyship knows of nothing that has been carried on clandestinely between her and Mr Oakly? [*In disorder.*

L. Free. Mr Oakly!

Mrs Oak. Mr Oakly—no, not Mr Oakly—that is, not my husband—I don't mean him—not him—but his nephew—young Mr Oakly.

L. Free. Jealous of her husband! So, so! now I know my game. [*Aside.*

Mrs Oak. But pray, madam, give me leave to ask, was there any thing very particular in her conduct, while she was in your ladyship's house?

L. Free. Why, really, considering she was here scarce a week, her behaviour was rather mysterious;—letters and messages to and fro, between her, and I don't know who——I suppose you know that Mr Oakly's nephew has been here, madam?

Mrs Oak. I was not sure of it. Has he been to wait on your ladyship already on this occasion?

L. Free. To wait on me!——the expression is much too polite for the nature of his visit.—My Lord Trinket, the nobleman whom you met as you came in, had, you must know, madam, some thoughts of my niece, and, as it would have been an advantageous match, I was glad of it; but I believe, after what he has been witness to this morning, he will drop all thoughts of it.

Mrs Oak. I am sorry that any relation of mine should so far forget himself——

L. Free. It's no matter—his behaviour, indeed, as well as the young lady's, was pretty extraordinary——and yet, after all, I don't believe he is the object of her affections.

Mrs Oak. Ha! [*Much alarmed.*

L. Free. She has certainly an attachment somewhere, a strong one; but his lordship, who was present all the time, was convinced, as well as myself, that Mr Oakly's nephew was rather a convenient friend, a kind of go-between, than the lover.——Bless me, madam, you change colour! you seem uneasy! What's the matter?

Mrs Oak. Nothing,——madam,——nothing,——a little shock'd that my husband should behave so.

L. Free. Your husband, madam!

Mrs Oak. His nephew, I mean.——His unpardonable rudeness——but I am not well——I am sorry I have given your ladyship so much trouble——I'll take my leave.

L. Free. I declare, madam, you frighten me. Your being so visibly affected, makes me quite uneasy. I hope I have not said any thing——I really don't believe your husband is in fault. Men, to be sure, allow themselves strange liberties. But I think, nay I am sure, it cannot be so. It is impossible. Don't let what I have said have any effect on you.

Mrs Oak. No, it has not——I have no idea of such a thing.——Your ladyship's most obedient—[*Going, returns.*]———But sure, madam, you have not heard, or don't know any thing?

L. Free. Come, come, Mrs Oakly, I see how it is, and it would not be kind to say all I know. I dare not tell you what I have heard. Only be on your guard—there can be no harm in that. Do you be against giving the girl any countenance, and see what effect it has.

Mrs Oak. I will———I am much obliged——But does it appear to your ladyship then that Mr Oakly———

L. Free. No, not at all—nothing in't, I dare say—I would not create uneasiness in a family—

but I am a woman myself, have been married, and cann't help feeling for you.—But don't be uneasy, there's nothing in't, I dare say.

Mrs Oak. I think so.——Your ladyship's humble servant.

L. Free. Your servant, madam.——Pray don't be alarmed, I must insist on your not making yourself uneasy.

Mrs Oak. Not at all alarmed—not in the least uneasy.—Your most obedient. [*Exit.*

L. Free. Ha, ha, ha! There she goes, brimful of anger and jealousy, to vent it all on her husband. Mercy on the poor man!

Enter Lord TRINKET.

Bless me! my lord, I thought you was gone.

L. Trink. Only into the next room. My curiosity would not let me stir a step further. I heard it all, and was never more diverted in my life, 'pon honour. Ha, ha, ha!

L. Free. How the silly creature took it! Ha, ha, ha!

L. Trink. Ha, ha, ha!—My dear Lady Freelove, you have a deal of ingenuity, a deal of *esprit*, 'pon honour.

L. Free. A little shell thrown into the enemy's works, that's all.

Both. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

L. Free. But I must leave you. I have twenty visits to pay. You'll let me know how you succeed in your secret expedition.

L. Trink. That you may depend on.

L. Free. Remember then that to-morrow morning I expect to see you.——At present your lordship will excuse me.——Who's there? [*Calling to the servants.*] Send Epingle into my dressing-room. [*Exit.*

L. Trink. So!——If O'Cutter and his myrmidons are alert, I think I cann't fail of success, and then *prenez garde*, Mademoiselle Harriot!——This is one of the drollest circumstances in nature.——Here is my Lady Freelove, a woman of sense, a woman that knows the world too, assisting me in this design. I never knew her ladyship so much out.——How, in the name of wonder, can she imagine that a man of quality, or any man else 'egad, would marry a fine girl, after——not I, 'pon honour. No—no—when I have had the *entamure*, let who will take the rest of the loaf. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to Mr* OAKLY'S *House.*

Enter HARRIOT *following a servant.*

Har. Not at home!——Are you sure that Mrs Oakly is not at home, sir?

Serv. She is just gone out, madam.

Har. I have something of consequence——If you will give me leave, sir, I will wait till she returns.

Serv. You would not see her, if you did, madam. She has given positive orders not to be interrupted with any company to-day.

Har. Sure, sir, if you was to let her know that I had particular business——

Serv. I should not dare to trouble her, indeed, madam.

Har. How unfortunate this is! What can I do?—Pray, sir, can I see Mr Oakly then?

Serv. Yes, madam: I'll acquaint my master, if you please.

Har. Pray do, sir.

Serv. Will you favour me with your name, madam?

Har. Be pleased, sir, to let him know that a lady desires to speak with him.

Serv. I shall, madam. [*Exit Servant.*

Har. I wish I could have seen Mrs Oakly. What an unhappy situation am I reduced to! What will the world say of me?—And yet what could I do? To remain at Lady Freelove's was impossible. Charles, I must own, has this very day revived much of my tenderness for him; and yet I dread the wildness of his disposition. I must now, however, solicit Mr Oakly's protection, a circumstance (all things considered) rather disagreeable to a delicate mind, and which nothing, but the absolute necessity of it, could excuse. Good heavens! What a multitude of difficulties and distresses am I thrown into by my father's obstinate perseverance to force me into a marriage, which my soul abhors!

Enter OAKLY.

Oak. [*At entering*] Where is this lady?——[*Seeing her.*] Bless me, Miss Russet, is it you?——Was ever any thing so unlucky? [*Aside*] Is it possible, madam, that I see you here?

Har. It is too true, sir; and the occasion on which I am now to trouble you is so much in need of an apology, that——

Oak. Pray make none, madam.——If my wife should return before I get her out of the house again!—— [*Aside.*

Har. I dare say, sir, you are not quite a stranger to the attachment your nephew has professed to me.

Oak. I am not, madam. I hope Charles has not been guilty of any baseness towards you. If he has, I'll never see his face again.

Har. I have no cause to accuse him. But—

Oak. But what, madam? Pray be quick!——The very person in the world I would not have seen! [*Aside.*

Har. You seem uneasy, sir!

Oak. No, nothing at all—Pray go on, madam.

Har. I am at present, sir, through a concurrence of strange accidents, in a very unfortunate situation, and do not know what will become of me without your assistance.

Oak. I'll do every thing in my power to serve you. I know of your leaving your father, by a letter we have had from him. Pray let me know the rest of your story.

Har. My story, sir, is very short. When I left my father's I came immediately to London, and took refuge with a relation, where, instead of meeting with the protection I expected, I was alarmed with the most infamous designs upon my honour. It is not an hour ago, since your nephew rescued

me from the attempts of a villain. I tremble to think, that I left him actually engaged in a duel.

Oak. He is very safe. He has just sent home the chariot from the St Alban's tavern, where he dines to-day. But what are your commands for me, madam?

Har. I am heartily glad to hear of his safety.—The favour, sir, I would now request of you is, that you should suffer me to remain for a few days in your house.

Oak. Madam!

Har. And that in the mean time you will use your utmost endeavours to reconcile me to my father, without his forcing me into a marriage with Sir Harry Beagle.

Oak. This is the most perplexing situation!—Why did not Charles take care to bestow you properly?

Har. It is most probable, sir, that I should not have consented to such a measure myself. The world is but too apt to censure, even without a cause: and if you are so kind as to admit me into your house, I must desire not to consider Mr Oakly in any other light than as your nephew; as, in my present circumstances, I have particular objections to it.

Oak. What an unlucky circumstance!—Upon my soul, madam, I would do any thing to serve you—but being in my house creates a difficulty that——

Har. I hope, sir, you do not doubt the truth of what I have told you.

Oak. I religiously believe every tittle of it, madam, but I have particular family considerations, that—

Har. Sure, sir, you cannot suspect me to be base enough to form any connections in your family contrary to your inclinations, while I am living in your house.

Oak. Such connections, madam, would do me and all my family great honour. I never dreamt of any scruples on that account.—What can I do?—Let me see—let me see—suppose— [*Pausing.*

Enter Mrs OAKLY *behind, in a capuchin, tippet, &c.*

Mrs Oak. I am sure I heard the voice of a woman conversing with my husband—Ha! [*Seeing* HARRIOT.] It is so, indeed! Let me contain myself—I'll listen.

Har. I see, sir, you are not inclined to serve me—good heaven! what am I reserved to?—— Why, why did I leave my father's house to expose myself to greater distresses? [*Ready to weep.*

Oak. I would do any thing for your sake: indeed I would. So pray be comforted, and I'll think of some proper place to bestow you in.

Mrs Oak. So! so!

Har. Wha place can be so proper as your own house?

Oak. My dear madam, I—I—

Mrs Oak. My dear madam—mighty well!

Oak. Hush!—Hark!—what noise—no—nothing. But I'll be plain with you, madam, we may be interrupted—The family consideration I hinted at, is nothing else than my wife. She is a little unhappy in her temper, madam!—and if you was to be admitted into the house, I don't know what would be the consequence.

Mrs Oak. Very fine!

Har. My behaviour, sir—

Oak. My dear life, it would be impossible for you to behave in such a manner as not to give her suspicion.

Har. But if your nephew, sir, took every thing upon himself—

Oak. Still that would not do, madam!—Why this very morning, when the letter came from your father, though I positively denied any knowledge of it, and Charles owned it, yet it was almost impossible to pacify her.

Mrs Oak. The letter!—How I have been bubbled!

Har. What shall I do? What will become of me?

Oak. Why, look'e, my dear madam, since my wife is so strong an objection, it is absolutely impossible for me to take you into the house. Nay, if I had not known she was gone out just before you came, I should be uneasy at your being here even now. So we must manage as well as we can. I'll take a private lodging for you a little way off, unknown to Charles or my wife, or any body; and if Mrs Oakly should discover it at last, why the whole matter will light upon Charles, you know.

Mrs Oak. Upon Charles!

Har. How unhappy is my situation! [*Weeping.*] I am ruined for ever.

Oak. Ruin'd! Not at all. Such a thing as this has happened to many a young lady before you, and all has been well again—Keep up your spirits! I'll contrive, if I possibly can, to visit you every day.

Mrs Oak. [*Advancing.*] Will you so? O, Mr Oakly! have I discovered you at last? I'll visit you, indeed. And you, my dear madam, I'll—

Har. Madam, I don't understand—

Mrs Oak. I understand the whole affair, and have understood it for some time past.—You shall have a private lodging, miss!——It is the fittest place for you, I believe.—How dare you look me in the face?

Oak. For heaven's sake, my love, don't be so violent.—You are quite wrong in this affair—you don't know who you are talking to. That lady is a person of fashion.

Mrs Oak. Fine fashion, indeed! to seduce other women's husbands!

Har. Dear madam; how can you imagine—

Oak. I tell you, my dear, this is the young lady that Charles——

Mrs Oak. Mighty well! but that won't do, sir!—Did not I hear you lay the whole intrigue together? Did not I hear your fine plot of throwing all the blame upon Charles—

Oak. Nay, be cool a moment.—You must know, my dear, that the letter which came this morning related to this lady—

Mrs Oak. I know it.

Oak. And since that, it seems, Charles has been so fortunate as to—

Mrs Oak. O, you deceitful man!—That trick is too stale to pass again with me.—It is plain now what you meant by your proposing to take her into the house this morning.—But the gentlewoman could introduce herself, I see.

Oak. Fie! fie! my dear, she came on purpose to enquire for you.

Mrs Oak. For me!—better and better!—Did not she watch her opportunity, and come to you just as I went out? But I am obliged to you for your visit, madam. It is sufficiently paid. Pray don't let me detain you.

Oak. For shame! for shame, Mrs Oakly! How can you be so absurd? Is this proper behaviour to a lady of her character?

Mrs Oak. I have heard her character. Go, my fine run-away madam! Now you've eloped from your family, and run away from your aunt! Go! —You sha'n't stay here, I promise you.

Oak. Pr'ythee, be quiet. You don't know what you are doing. She shall stay.

Mrs Oak. She sha'n't stay a minute.

Oak. She shall stay a minute, an hour, a day, a week, a month, a year!—'Sdeath, madam, she shall stay for ever if I choose it.

Mrs Oak. How!

Har. For heaven's sake, sir, let me go. I am frighted to death.

Oak. Don't be afraid, madam!—She shall stay, I insist upon it.

Rus. [*Within.*] I tell you, sir, I will go up. I am sure the lady is here, and nothing shall hinder me.

Har. O my father! my father! [*Faints away.*

Oak. See! she faints. [*Catching her.*]—Ring the bell! Who's there?

Mrs Oak. What! take her into your arms too! —I have no patience.

Enter RUSSET *and Servants.*

Rus. Where is this—ha! fainting! [*Running to her.*] O my dear Harriot! my child! my child!

Oak. Your coming so abruptly shocked her spirits. But she revives. How do you, madam?

Har. [*To* RUSSET.] O, sir!

Rus. O my dear girl! How could you run away from your father, that loves you with such fondness!—But I was sure I should find you here—

Mrs Oak. There—there!—sure he should find her here! Did not I tell you so?—Are not you a wicked man, to carry on such base underhand doings with a gentleman's daughter?

Rus. Let me tell you, sir, whatever you may think of the matter, I shall not easily put up with this behaviour.—How durst you encourage my daughter to an elopement, and receive her into your house.

Mrs Oak. There, mind that!—The thing is as plain as the light.

Oak. I tell you, you misunderstand——

Rus. Look you, Mr Oakly, I shall expect satisfaction from your family for so gross an affront. —Zounds, sir! I am not to be used ill by any man in England.

Har. My dear sir, I can assure you——

Rus. Hold your tongue, girl! You'll put me in a passion.

Oak. Sir, this is all a mistake.

Rus. A mistake! Did not I find her in your house?

Oak. Upon my soul, she has not been in my house above——

Mrs Oak, Did not I hear you say you would take her a lodging, a private lodging?

Oak. Yes, but that——

Rus. Has not this affair been carried on a long time in spite of my teeth?

Oak. Sir, I never troubled myself——

Mrs Oak. Never troubled yourself!—Did not you insist on her staying in the house, whether I would or no?

Oak. No.

Rus. Did not you send to meet her, when she came to town?

Oak. No.

Mrs Oak. Did not you deceive me about the letter this morning?

Oak. No——no——no——I tell you, no!

Mrs Oak. Yes—yes—yes—I tell you, yes!

Rus. Sha'n't I believe my own eyes?

Mrs Oak. Sha'n't I believe my own ears?

Oak. I tell you, you are both deceived.

Rus. Zounds, sir, I'll have satisfaction.

Mrs Oak. I'll stop these fine doings, I warrant you.

Oak. 'Sdeath, you will not let me speak—and you are both alike, I think.——I wish you were married to one another with all my heart.

Mrs Oak. Mighty well! mighty well!

Rus. I shall soon find a time to talk with you.

Oak. Find a time to talk! you have talked enough now for all your lives.

Mrs Oak. Very fine! Come along, sir! Leave that lady with her father: Now she is in the properest hands.

Oak. I wish I could leave you in his hands. [*Going, returns.*] I shall follow, you, madam! One word with you, sir!——The height of your passion, and Mrs Oakly's strange misapprehension of this whole affair, makes it impossible to explain matters to you at present. I will do it when you please, and how you please. [*Exit.*

Rus. Yes, yes: I'll have satisfaction.——So, madam! I have found you at last.——You have made a fine confusion here.

Har. I have, indeed, been the innocent cause of a great deal of confusion.

Rus. Innocent!——What business had you to be running hither after——

Har. My dear sir, you misunderstand the whole affair. I have not been in this house half an hour.

Rus. Zounds, girl, don't put me in a passion! ——You know I love you——but a lie puts me in a passion. But come along—we'll leave this house directly—[CHARLES *singing without.*] Heyday! what now?

After a noise without, enter CHARLES, *drunk.*

Char. But my wine neither nurses nor babies can bring,
And a big-bellied bottle's a mighty good thing. [*Singing.*
What's here? a woman? Harriot! impossible! My dearest, sweetest Harriot! I have been looking all over the town for you, and at last——when I was tired——and weary—and disappointed—why then the honest major and I sat down together to drink your health in pint bumpers.
[*Running up to her.*

Rus. Stand off!——How dare you take any liberty with my daughter before me? Zouns, sir, I'll be the death of you.

Char. Ha! 'Squire Russet too!——You jolly old cock, how do you?—But Harriot! my dear girl! [*Taking hold of her.*] My life, my soul, my——

Rus. Let her go, sir—Come away, Harriot!—Leave him this instant, or I'll tear you asunder.
[*Pulling her.*

Har. There needs no violence to tear me from a man who could disguise himself in such a gross manner, at a time when he knew I was in the utmost distress. [*Disengages herself, and exit with* RUSSET.]

Char. Only hear me, sir——Madam!——my dear Harriot——Mr Russet——gone!——she's gone!—and egad in very ill humour, and in very bad company!——I'll go after her—but hold!—I shall only make it worse——as I did—now I recollect—once before. How the devil came they here?—Who would have thought of finding her in my own house?—— My head turns round with conjectures.—I believe I am drunk—very drunk——so 'egad, I'll e'en go and sleep myself sober, and then enquire the meaning of all this. For,

I love Sue, and Sue loves me, &c.
[*Exit singing.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—OAKLY'S *House.*

Enter Mrs OAKLY *and Major* OAKLY.

Maj. Well——well——but, sister!——

Mrs Oak. I will know the truth of this matter. Why cann't you tell me the whole of the story?

Maj. I'll tell you nothing.——There's nothing to tell——you know the truth already.——Besides, what have I to do with it? Suppose there was a disturbance yesterday, what's that to me? was I here? it's no business of mine.

Mrs Oak. Then why do you study to make it so? Am I not well assured that this mischief commenced at your house in the country? And now you are carrying it on in town.

Maj. This is always the case in family squabbles. My brother has put you out of humour, and you choose to vent your spleen upon me.

Mrs Oak. Because I know that you are the occasion of his ill usage. Mr Oakly never behaved in such a manner before.

Maj. I? Am I the occasion of it?

Mrs Oak. Yes, you. I am sure on't.

Maj. I am glad on't with all my heart.

Mrs Oak. Indeed!

Maj. Ay, indeed; and you are the more obliged to me.—Come, come, sister, it's time you should reflect a little. My brother is become a public jest; and bye-and-bye, if this foolish affair gets wind, the whole family will be the subject of town-talk.

Mrs Oak. And well it may, when you take so much pains to expose us.——The little disquiets and uneasiness of other families are kept secret; but here quarrels are fomented, and afterwards industriously made public.——And you, sir, you have done all this——you are my greatest enemy.

Maj. Your truest friend, sister.

Mrs Oak. But it's no wonder. You have no feelings of humanity, no sense of domestic happiness, no idea of tenderness or attachment to any woman.

Maj. No idea of plague or disquiet—no, no—and yet I can love a woman for all that——heartily——as you say, tenderly——But then I always choose a woman should shew a little love for me too.

Mrs Oak. Cruel insinuation!—But I defy your malice——Mr Oakly can have no doubt of my affection for him.

Maj. Nor I neither; and yet your affection, such as it is, has all the evil properties of aversion. You absolutely kill him with kindness. Why, what a life he leads! He serves for nothing but a mere whetstone of your ill-humour.

Mrs Oak. Pray now, sir!——

Maj. The violence of your temper makes his house uncomfortable to him, poisons his meals, and breaks his rest.

Mrs Oak. I beg, Major Oakly, that——

Maj. This it is to have a wife that dotes upon one!——the least trifle kindles your suspicion enough to say it was keeping company with me; you take fire in an instant, and set the whole family in a blaze.

Mrs Oak. This is beyond all patience.—No, sir, 'tis you are the incendiary—you are the cause of—I cann't bear such—[*Ready to weep.*]—From this instant, sir, I forbid you my house. However Mr Oakly may treat me himself, I'll never be made the sport of all his insolent relations. [*Exit.*

Maj. Yes, yes, I knew I should be turn'd out of doors. There she goes——back again to my brother directly. Poor gentleman!——'Slife, if he was but half the man that I am, I'd engage to keep her going to and fro all day, like a shuttle-cock.

Enter CHARLES.

What, Charles!

Char. O major! have you heard of what happened after I left you yesterday?

Maj. Heard! Yes, yes, I have heard it plain enough. But poor Charles! Ha, ha, ha! What a scene of confusion! I would give the world to have been there.

Char. And I would give the world to have been any where else. Cursed fortune!

Maj. To come in so opportunely at the tail of an adventure!——Was not your mistress mighty glad to see you? You was very fond of her, I dare say.

Char. I am upon the rack. Who can tell what rudeness I might offer her! I can remember nothing——I deserve to lose her——to make myself a beast!——and at such a time too!——O fool, fool, fool!

Maj. Pr'ythee be quiet, Charles!——Never vex yourself about nothing; this will all be made up the first time you see her.

Char. I should dread to see her——and yet the not knowing where she is, distracts me——her father may force her to marry Sir Harry Beagle immediately.

Maj. Not he, I promise you. She'd run plump into your arms first, in spite of her father's teeth.

Char. But then her father's violence, and the mildness of her disposition——

Maj. Mildness!——Ridiculous!——Trust to the spirit of the sex in her. I warrant you, like all the rest, she'll have perverseness enough not to do as her father would have her.

Char. Well, well—But then my behaviour to her. To expose myself in such a condition to her again! The very occasion of our former quarrel!——

Maj. Quarrel! ha, ha, ha! What signifies a quarrel with a mistress? Why, the whole affair of making love, as they call it, is nothing but quarrelling and making it up again. They quarrel o' purpose to kiss and be friends.

Char. Then indeed things seemed to be taking a fortunate turn——To renew our difference at such a time!——Just when I had some reason to hope for a reconciliation!——May wine be my poison if ever I am drunk again!

Maj. Ay, ay, so every man says the next morning.

Char. Where, where can she be? Her father would hardly carry her back to Lady Freelove's, and he has no house in town himself, nor Sir Harry——I don't know what to think——I'll go in search of her, though I don't know where to direct myself.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. A gentleman, sir, that calls himself Captain O'Cutter, desires to speak with you.

Char. Don't trouble me——I'll see nobody——I'm not at home——

Serv. The gentleman says he has very particular business, and he must see you.

Char. What's his name? Who did you say?

Serv. Captain O'Cutter, sir.

Char. Captain O'Cutter! I never heard of him before. Do you know any thing of him, major?

Maj. Not I——But you hear he has particular business. I'll leave the room.

Char. He can have no business that need be a secret to you.——Desire the captain to walk up.——[*Exit Servant.*]——What would I give if this unknown captain was to prove a messenger from my Harriot!

Enter Captain O'CUTTER.

O'Cut. Jontlemen, your sarvant. Is either of your names Charles Oakly, Esq.?

Char. Charles Oakly, sir, is my name, if you have any business with it.

O'Cut. Avast, avast, my dear!—I have a little business with your name, but, as I was to let nobody know it, I cann't mention it till you clear the decks, fait.— [*Pointing to the major.*

Char. This gentleman, sir, is my most intimate friend, and any thing that concerns me may be mentioned before him.

O'Cut. O, if he's your friend, my dear, we may do all above-board. It's only about your deciding a deferance with my Lord Trinket. He wants to shew you a little warm work; and, as I was steering this way, he desired me to fetch you this letter. [*Giving a letter.*]

Maj. How, sir, a challenge?

O'Cut. Yes, fait, a challenge. I am to be his lordship's second; and if you are fond of a hot birth, and will come along with that jontleman, we'll all go to it together, and make a little line of battle a-head of our own, my dear.

Char. [*Reading.*] Ha! what's this? This may be useful. [*Aside.*

Maj. Sir, I am infinitely obliged to you.—A rare fellow this. [*Aside.*] Yes, yes, I'll meet all the good company. I'll be there in my waistcoat and pumps, and take a morning's breathing with you. Are you very fond of fighting, sir?

O'Cut. Indeed and I am; I love it better than salt beef or biscuit.

Maj. But, pray, sir, how are you interested in this difference? Do you know what it is about?

O'Cut. O, the devil burn me, not I. What signifies what it's about, you know, so we do but tilt a little?

Maj. What! fight and not know for what?

O'Cut. When the signal's out for engaging, what signifies talking?

Maj. I fancy, sir, a duel is a common breakfast with you. I'll warrant now, you have been engaged in many such affairs.

O'Cut. Upon my soul, and I have: sea or land, it's all one to little Terence O'Cutter.—When I was last in Dublin, I fought one jontleman for cheating me out of a tousand pounds; I fought two of the Mermaid's crew about Sally Macguire; tree about politics; and one about the play-house in Smock-Alley. But, upon my fait, since I am in England, I have done nothing at-all, at-all.

Char. This is lucky—but my transport will discover me. [*Aside.*] Will you be so kind, sir, [*To* O'CUTTER.] as to make my compliments to his lordship, and assure him that I shall do myself the honour of waiting on him.

O'Cut. Indeed and I will.—Arrah, my dear, won't you come too? [*To Major* OAKLY.

Maj. Depend upon't. We'll go through the whole exercise: carte, tierce, and segoon, captain.

Char. Now to get my intelligence. [*Aside.*] I think the time, sir, his lordship appoints in his letter, is—a———

O'Cut. You say right——Six o'clock.

Char. And the place—a—a—is——I think, behind Montague-House.

O'Cut. No, my dear!——Avast, by the Ring in Hyde-Park, fait——I settled it there myself, for fare of interruption.

Char. True, as you say, the Ring in Hyde-Park—I had forgot—Very well, I'll not fail you, sir.

O'Cut. Devil burn me, not I. Upon my shoul, little Terence O'Cutter will see fair play, or he'll know the reason—And so, my dear, your sarvant. [*Exit.*

Maj. Ha, ha, ha! What a fellow!———He loves fighting like a game-cock.

Char. O uncle! the luckiest thing in the world!

Maj. What! to have the chance of being run through the body! I desire no such good fortune.

Char. Wish me joy, wish me joy! I have found her, my dear girl, my Harriot!——She is at an inn in Holborn, major!

Maj. Ay! how do you know?

Char. Why, this dear, delightful, charming, blundering captain has delivered me a wrong letter.

Maj. A wrong letter!

Char. Yes, a letter from Lord Trinket to Lady Freelove.

Maj. The devil! What are the contents?

Char. The news I told you just now, that she's at an inn in Holborn:—and besides, an excuse from my lord, for not waiting on her ladyship this morning, according to his promise, as he shall be entirely taken up with his design upon Harriot.

Maj. So!—so!—A plot between the lord and the lady.

Char. What his plot is I don't know, but I shall beg leave to be made a party in it: so perhaps his lordship and I may meet and *decide* our *deferance*, as the captain calls it, before to-morrow morning.——There! read, read, man! [*Giving the letter.*

Maj. [*Reading.*] Um—um—um———Very fine! And what do you propose doing?

Char. To go thither immediately.

Maj. Then you shall take me with you. Who knows what his lordship's designs may be? I begin to suspect foul play.

Char. No, no; pray mind your own business. If I find there is any need of your assistance, I'll send for you.

Maj. You'll manage this affair like a boy now—Go on rashly with noise and bustle, and fury, and get yourself into another scrape.

Char. No—no—Let me alone; I'll go *incog.* leave my chariot at some distance—proceed prudently, and take care of myself, I warrant you. I did not imagine that I should ever rejoice at receiving a challenge, but this is the most fortunate accident that could possibly have happened. B'ye, b'ye, uncle! [*Exit hastily.*

Maj. I don't half approve of this—and yet I can hardly suspect his lordship of any very deep designs neither.—Charles may easily outwit him. Hark ye, William!

[*At seeing a servant at some distance.*

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir!

Maj. Where's my brother?

Serv. In his study——alone, sir.

Maj. And how is he, William?

Serv. Pretty well, I believe, sir.

Maj. Ay, ay, but is he in good humour, or—

Serv. I never meddle in family affairs, not I, sir. [*Exit.*

Maj. Well said, William!——No bad hint for me, perhaps!—What a strange world we live in!—No two people in it love one another better than my brother and sister, and yet the bitterest enemies could not torment each other more heartily.——Ah, if he had but half my spirit!——And yet he don't want it neither—But I know his temper—He pieces out the matter with maxims, and scraps of philosophy, and odds and ends of sentences—I must live in peace—Patience is the best remedy—Any thing for a quiet life! and so on——However, yesterday, to give him his due, he behaved like a man. Keep it up, brother! keep it up! or it's all over with you. Since mischief is on foot, I'll even set it forward on all sides. I'll in to him directly, read him one of my morning lectures, and persuade him, if I possibly can, to go out with me immediately; or work him up to some open act of rebellion against the sovereign authority of his lady-wife. Zounds, brother! rant, and roar, and rave, and turn the house out of the window. If I was a husband!——'Sdeath, what a pity it is, that nobody knows how to manage a wife but a batchelor. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to the Bull and Gate Inn.*

Enter HARRIOT.

Har. What will become of me? My father is enraged, and deaf to all remonstrances, and here I am to remain by his positive orders, to receive this booby baronet's odious addresses.—Among all my distresses, I must confess that Charles's behaviour yesterday is not the least. So wild! so given up to excesses! And yet——I am ashamed to own it even myself——I love him: and death itself shall not prevail on me to give my

hand to Sir Harry.——But here he comes! What shall I do with him?

Enter Sir HARRY BEAGLE.

Sir H. Your servant, miss!——What! not speak?——Bashful, mayhap—Why then I will.—Look'e, miss, I am a man of few words.——What signifies haggling? It looks just like a dealer.——What d'ye think of me for a husband?——I am a tight young fellow—sound wind and limb—free from all natural blemishes—Rum all over, damme.

Har. Sir, I don't understand you. Speak English, and I'll give you an answer.

Sir H. English! why so I do—and good plain English too.——What d'ye think of me for a husband?—That's English—en't it?——I know none of your French lingo, none of your *parly-voos*, not I.—What d'ye think of me for a husband? The 'squire says you shall marry me.

Har. What shall I say to him? I had best be civil. [*Aside.*]—I think, sir, you deserve a much better wife, and beg———

Sir H. Better! No, no,—though you're so knowing, I'm not to be taken in so.——You're a fine thing——Your points are all good.

Har. Sir Harry! sincerity is above all ceremony. Excuse me, if I declare I never will be your wife. And if you have a real regard for me and my happiness, you will give up all pretensions to me. Shall I beseech you, sir, to persuade my father not to urge a marriage, to which I am determined never to consent?

Sir H. Hey! how! what! be off!——Why, it's a match, miss!——It's done and done on both sides.

Har. For Heaven's sake, sir, withdraw your claim to me.—I never can be prevailed on—indeed I cann't———

Sir H. What, make a match and then draw stakes! That's doing of nothing—Play or pay all the world over.

Har. Let me prevail on you, sir!——I am determined not to marry you at all events.

Sir H. But your father's determined you shall, miss.—So the odds are on my side.——I am not quite sure of my horse, but I have the rider hollow

Har. Your horse! Sir—d'ye take me for—but I forgive you.—I beseech you come into my proposal. It will be better for us both in the end.

Sir H. I cann't be off.

Har. Let me entreat you.

Sir H. I tell you, it's unpossible.

Har. Pray, pray do, sir.

Sir H. I cann't, damme.

Har. I beseech you.

Sir H. [*Whistles.*]

Har. How! laughed at?

Sir H. Will you marry me? Dear Ally, Ally Croker! [*Singing.*

Har. Marry you? I had rather be married to a slave, a wretch——You! [*Walks about.*

Sir H. A fine going thing.——She has a deal of foot——treads well upon her pasterns——goes above her ground——

Har. Peace, wretch!—Do you talk to me as if I were your horse?

Sir H. Horse! Why not speak of my horse? If your fine ladies had half as many good qualities, they would be much better bargains.

Har. And if their wretches of husbands liked them half so well as they do their horses, they would lead better lives.

Sir H. Mayhap so.——But what signifies talking to you?——The 'squire shall know your tricks——He'll doctor you.——I'll go and talk to him.

Har. Go any where, so that you go from me.

Sir H. He'll break you in—If you won't go in a snaffle, you must be put in a curb——He'll cak you, damme. [*Exit.*

Har. A wretch!——But I was to blame to suffer his brutal behaviour to ruffle my temper.——I could expect nothing else from him, and he is below my anger.——How much trouble has this odious fellow caused both to me and my poor father!—I never disobeyed him before, and my denial now makes him quite unhappy. In any thing else I would be all submission; and even now, while I dread his rage, my heart bleeds for his uneasiness——I wish I could resolve to obey him.

Enter RUSSET.

Rus. Are not you a sad girl? a perverse, stubborn, obstinate———

Har. My dear sir——

Rus. Look ye, Harriot, don't speak,——you'll put me in a passion——Will you have him?——Answer me that—Why don't the girl speak?——Will you have him?

Har. Dearest sir, there is nothing in the world else———

Rus. Why, there!—there!——Look ye there!——Zounds, you shall have him——Hussy, you shall have him——You shall marry him to-night——Did you not promise to receive him civilly?—How came you to affront him?

Har. Sir, I did receive him very civilly; but his behaviour was so insolent and insupportable——

Rus. Insolent!—Zounds, I'll blow his brains out——Insolent to my dear Harriot!—A rogue! a villain! a scoundrel! I'll—but it's a lie—I know it's a lie—He durst not behave insolent—Will you have him? Answer me that. Will you have him?——Zounds you shall have him.

Har. If you have any love for me, sir———

Rus. Love for you!—You know I love you—You know your poor fond father dotes on you to madness.——I would not force you, if I did not love you—Don't I want you to be happy?——But I know what you would have. You want young Oakly, a rakehelly, drunken——

Har. Release me from Sir Harry, and if I ever marry against your consent, renounce me for ever.

Rus. I will renounce you, unless you'll have Sir Harry.

Har. Consider, my dear sir, you'll make me miserable. I would die to please you, but cannot prostitute my hand to a man my heart abhors, ——Absolve me from this hard command, and in every thing else, it will be happiness to obey you.

Rus. You'll break my heart, Harriot, you'll break my heart——Make you miserable!—Don't I want to make you happy? Is not he the richest man in the county?—That will make you happy—Don't all the pale-faced girls in the country long to get him?——And yet you are so perverse, and wayward, and stubborn——Zounds, you shall have him.

Har. For Heaven's sake, sir————

Rus. Hold your tongue, Harriot!—I'll hear none of your nonsense.——You shall have him, I tell you, you shall have him——He shall marry you this very night——I'll go for a licence and a parson immediately. Zounds! Why do I stand arguing with you? An't I your father? Have not I a right to dispose of you? You shall have him.

Har. Sir!——

Rus. I won't hear a word. You shall have him. [*Exit.*

Har. Sir!—Hear me!—but one word!—He will not hear me, and is gone to prepare for this odious marriage. I will die before I consent to it. You shall have him! O that fathers would enforce their commands by better arguments! And yet I pity him, while he afflicts me.—He upbraided me with Charles, his wildness and intemperance—Alas! but too justly——I see that he is wedded to his excesses; and I ought to conquer an affection for him, which will only serve to make me unhappy.

Enter CHARLES *in a Frock, &c.*

Ha! What do I see? [*Screaming.*

Char. Peace, my love!—My dear life, make no noise!—I have been hovering about the house this hour:——I just now saw your father and Sir Harry go out, and have seized this precious opportunity to throw myself at your feet.

Har. You have given yourself, sir, a great deal of needless trouble. I did not expect or hope for the favour of such a visit.

Char. O my dear Harriot, your words and looks cut me to the soul. You cann't imagine what I suffer, and have suffered since last night——And yet I have in some fond moments flattered myself, that the service I was so fortunate as to do you at Lady Freelove's, would plead a little in my favour.

Har. You may remember, sir, that you took a very early opportunity of cancelling that obligation.

Char. I do remember it with shame and despair. But may I perish, if my joy at having delivered you from a villain was not the cause! My transport more than half intoxicated me, and wine made an easy conquest over me.—I tremble to think lest I should have behaved in such a manner as you cannot pardon.

Har. Whether I pardon you or no, sir, is a matter of mighty little consequence.

Char. O my Harriot! Upbraid me, reproach me, do any thing but look and talk with that air of coldness and indifference. Must I lose you for one offence, when my soul dotes on you, when I love you to distraction?

Har. Did it appear like love, your conduct yesterday? To lose yourself in riot, when I was exposed to the greatest distresses!

Char. I feel, I feel my shame, and own it.

Har. You confess that you don't know in what manner you behaved. Ought not I to tremble at the very thoughts of a man, devoted to a vice which renders him no longer a judge or master of his own conduct?

Char. Abandon me, if ever I am guilty of it again. O Harriot! I am distracted with ten thousand fears and apprehensions of losing you for ever—— The chambermaid, whom I bribed to admit me to you, told me, that, when the two gentlemen went out, they talked of a licence.—— What am I to think? Is it possible that you can resign yourself to Sir Harry Beagle?——[HARRIOT *pauses.*]——Can you then consent to give your hand to another? No, let me once more deliver you——Let us seize this lucky moment!—My chariot stands at the corner of the next street—Let me gently force you while their absence allows it, and convey you from the brutal violence of a constrained marriage.

Har. No!—I will wait the event, be it what it may.—O Charles, I am too much inclined—They sha'n't force me to marry Sir Harry——But your behaviour——Not half an hour ago, my father reproached me with the looseness of your character. [*Weeping.*

Char. I see my folly, and am ashamed of it. You have reclaimed me, Harriot!—On my soul, you have.——If all women were as attentive as yourself to the morals of their lovers, a libertine would be an uncommon character.——But let me persuade you to leave this place, while you may—Major Oakly will receive us at his house with pleasure—I am shocked at the thoughts of what your stay here may reserve you to.

Har. No, I am determined to remain.——To leave my father again, to go off openly with a man, of whose libertine character he has himself so lately been a witness, would justify his anger, and impeach my reputation.

Char. Fool! fool! How unhappy have I made myself!———Consider, my Harriot, the peculiarity of your situation; besides, I have reason to fear other designs against you.

Har. From other designs I can be no where so secure as with my father.

Char. Time flies——Let me persuade you!

Har. I am resolved to stay here.

Char. You distract me. For Heaven's sake—

Har. I will not think of it.

Char. Consider, my angel!————

Har. I do consider, that your conduct has made it absolutely improper for me to trust myself to your care.

Char. My conduct!—Vexation! 'Sdeath!—— But then, my dear Harriot, the danger you are in, the necessity———

Enter Chambermaid.

Chamb. O law, ma'am!——Such a terrible accident!——As sure as I am here, there's a press-gang has seized the two gemmin, and is carrying them away, thof so be one an'em says as how he's a knight and baronight, and that t'other's a 'squire and a housekeeper.

Har. Seized by a press-gang! impossible!

Char. O, now the design comes out.——But I'll baulk his lordship.

Chamb. Lack-a-dasy, ma'am, what can we do? There is master, and John Ostler, and Boot-catcher, all gone a'ter 'em.———There is such an uproar as never was. [*Exit.*

Har. If I thought this was your contrivance, sir, I would never speak to you again.

Char. I would sooner die than be guilty of it. —This is Lord Trinket's doing I am sure. I knew he had some scheme in agitation, by a letter I intercepted this morning.

Har. [*Screams.*]

Char. Ha! Here he comes. Nay then, it's plain enough. Don't be frighted, my love I'll protect you.——But now I must desire you to follow my directions.

Enter Lord TRINKET.

L. Trink. Now, madam——Pox on't, he here again!———Nay, then, [*Drawing.*] come, sir, you're unarmed, I see. Give up the lady: give her up, I say, or I am through you in a twinkling. [*Going to make a pass at* CHARLES.

Char. Keep your distance, my lord! I have arms. [*Producing a pistol.*] If you come a foot nearer, you have a brace of balls through your lordship's head.

L. Trink. How? what's this? pistols!

Char. At your lordship's service.——Sword and pistol, my lord.——Those, you know, are our weapons.——If this misses, I have the fellow to't in my pocket.——Don't be frighted, madam. His lordship has removed your friends and relations, but he will take great care of you. Shall I leave you with him?

Har. Cruel Charles! You know I must go with you now.

Char. A little way from the door, if your lordship pleases. [*Waving his hand.*

L. Trink. Sir!—'Sdeath;—Madam!——

Char. A little more round, my lord. [*Waving.*

L. Trink. But, sir! Mr Oakly!

Char. I have no leisure to talk with your lordship now.——A little more that way, if you please. [*Waving.*]—You know where I live.——If you have any commands for Miss Russet, you will hear of her too at my house.——Nay, keep back, my lord. [*Presenting.*] Your lordship's most obedient humble servant. [*Exit with* HARRIOT.

L. Trink. [*Looking after them, and pausing for a short time.*]——I cut a mighty ridiculous figure here, 'pon honour.——So I have been concerting this deep scheme, merely to serve him.—— Oh, the devil take such intrigues, and all silly country girls, that can give up a man of quality and figure, for a fellow that nobody knows.

[*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Lady* FREELOVE'S *House.*

Enter Lord TRINKET, *Lady* FREELOVE *with a letter, and Captain* O'CUTTER.

L. Trink. Was ever any thing so unfortunate? Pox on't, captain, how could you make such a strange blunder?

O'Cut. I never tought of a blunder. I was to deliver two letters, and if I give them one a-piece, I tought it was all one, fait.

L. Free. And so, my lord, the ingenious captain gave the letter intended for me to young Oakly, and here he has brought me a challenge.

L. Trink. Ridiculous! Never was any thing so *mal-apropos.*——Did you read the direction, captain?

O'Cut. Who, me?——Devil burn me, not I. I never rade at all.

L. Trink. 'Sdeath! how provoking! When I had secured the servants, and got all the people out of the way—when every thing was *en train.*

L. Free. Nay, never despair, my lord! things have happened unluckily, to be sure; and yet I think I could hit upon a method to set every thing to right again.

L. Trink. How? how? my dear Lady Freelove, how?

L. Free. Suppose then your lordship was to go and deliver these country gentlemen from their confinement; make them believe it was a plot of young Oakly's to carry off my niece; and so make a merit of your own services with the father.

L. Trink. Admirable! I'll about it immediately.

O'Cut. Has your lordship any occasion for my sarvice in this expedition?

L. Trink. O no:—Only release me these people, and then keep out of the way, dear captain.

O'Cut. With all my heart, fait. But you are all wrong:—this will not signify a brass farding. If you would let me alone, I would give him a salt eel, I warrant you.—But, upon my credit,

there's noting to be done without a little tilting. [*Exit.*

L. Free. Ha, ha! poor captain!

L. Trink. But where shall I carry them, when I have deliver'd them?

L. Free. To Mr Oakly's, by all means. You may be sure my niece is there.

L. Trink. To Mr Oakly's!—Why, does your ladyship consider? 'tis going directly in the fire of the enemy—throwing the *dementi* full in their teeth.

L. Free. So much the better. Face your enemies:—nay, you shall outface them too. Why, where's the difference between truths and untruths, if you do but stick close to the point? Falsehood would scarce ever be detected, if we had confidence enough to support it.

L. Trink. Nay, I don't want *bronze* upon occasion.—But to go amongst a whole troop of people, sure to contradict every word I say, is so dangerous——

L. Free. To leave Russet alone amongst them would be ten times more dangerous. You may be sure that Oakly's will be the first place he will go to after his daughter, where, if you don't accompany him, he will be open to all their suggestions. They'll be all in one story, and nobody there to contradict them: and then their dull truth would triumph, which must not be. No, no—positively, my lord, you must battle it out.

L. Trink. Well, I'll go, 'pon honour—and, if I could depend on your ladyship as a *corps de reserve*——

L. Free. I'll certainly meet you there. Tush! my lord, there's nothing in it. It's hard, indeed, if two persons of condition cann't bear themselves out against such trumpery folks as the family of the Oaklys.

L. Trink. Odious low people!—But I lose time—I must after the captain—and so, till we meet at Mr Oakly's, I kiss your ladyship's hand. —You won't fail me?

L. Free. You may depend on me.

[*Exit L.* TRINK.

L. Free. So, here is fine work! This artful little hussy has been too much for us all: Well, what's to be done? Why, when a woman of fashion gets into a scrape, nothing but a fashionable assurance can get her out of it again. I'll e'en go boldly to Mr Oakly's, as I have promised, and if it appears practicable, I will forward Lord Trinket's match; but if I find that matters have taken another turn, his lordship must excuse me. In that case I'll fairly drop him, seem a perfect stranger to all his intentions, and give my visit an air of congratulation to my niece and any other husband, which fortune, her wise father, or her ridiculous self has provided for her. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to Mrs* OAKLY'S *Dressing Room.*

Enter Mrs OAKLY.

Mrs Oak. This is worse and worse!——He never held me so much in contempt before.—— To go out without speaking to me, or taking the least notice.—I am obliged to the major for this. —How could he take him out? and how could Mr Oakly go with him?——

Enter TOILET.

Mrs Oak. Well, Toilet.

Toil. My master is not come back yet, ma'am.

Mrs Oak. Where is he gone?

Toil. I don't know, I can assure your ladyship.

Mrs Oak. Why don't you know?—You know nothing.—But I warrant you know well enough, if you would tell.—You shall never persuade me but you knew of Mr Oakly's going out today.

Toil. I wish I may die, ma'am, upon my honour, and I protest to your ladyship, I knew nothing in the world of the matter, no more than the child unborn. There is Mr Paris, my master's gentleman, knows—

Mrs Oak. What does he know?

Toil. That I knew nothing at all of the matter.

Mrs Oak. Where is Paris? What is he doing?

Toil. He is in my master's room, ma'am.

Mrs Oak. Bid him come here.

Toil. Yes, ma'am. [*Exit.*

Mrs Oak. He is certainly gone after this young flirt.—His confidence and the major's insolence provoke me beyond expression.

Re-enter TOILET *with* PARIS.

Where's your master?

Par. Il est sorti.

Mrs Oak. Where is he gone?

Par. Ah, madame, je n'en scai rien. I know noting of it.

Mrs Oak. Nobody knows any thing. Why did not you tell me he was going out?

Par. I dress him—Je ne m'en soucie pas du plus—He go where he will—I have no bisness wis it.

Mrs Oak. Yes, you should have told me—that was your business—and if you don't mind your business better, you sha'n't stay here, I can tell you, sir.

Par. Voila quelque chose d'extraordinaire!

Mrs Oak. Don't stand jabbering and shrugging your shoulders, but go, and enquire—go—and bring me word where he is gone.

Par. I don't know what I am do.—I'll ask John——

Mrs Oak. Bid John come to me.

Par. De tout mon cœur.—Jean! ici! Jean—Speak my ladi. [*Exit.*

Mrs Oak. Impudent fellow! His insolent gravity and indifference is insupportable——Toilet!

Toil. Ma'am.

Mrs Oak. Where's John! Why don't he come? Why do you stand with your hands before you? Why don't you fetch him?

Toil. Yes, ma'am—I'll go this minute——O, here, John! my lady wants you.

Enter JOHN.

Mrs Oak. Where's your master?

John. Gone out, madam.

Mrs Oak. Why did not you go with him?

John. Because he went out in the major's chariot, madam.

Mrs Oak. Where did they go to?

John. To the major's, I suppose, madam.

Mrs Oak. Suppose! Don't you know?

John. I believe so, but cann't tell for certain, indeed, madam.

Mrs Oak. Believe and suppose!—and don't know, and cann't tell!—You are all fools.——Go about your business. [JOHN *going*]—Come here. [*Returns*]—Go to the major's—no—it does not signify—go along. [JOHN *going.*]—Yes, hark'e, [*Returns.*] go to the major's, and see if your master is there.

John. Give your compliments, madam?

Mrs Oak. My compliments, blockhead! Get along, [JOHN *going.*] Come hither. [*Returns.*] Cann't you go to the major's, and bring me word if Mr Oakly is there, without taking any further notice?

John. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs Oak. Well, why don't you go, then? And make haste back.——And, d'ye hear, John—

[JOHN *going, returns.*

John. Madam.

Mrs Oak. Nothing at all—go along—[JOHN *goes.*]—How uneasy Mr Oakly makes me!——Hark'e, John! [JOHN *returns.*]

John. Madam!

Mrs Oak. Send the porter here.

John. Yes, madam. [*Exit.*

Toil. So, she's in a rare humour! I shall have a fine time on't.—[*Aside.*]——Will your ladyship choose to dress?

Mrs Oak. Pr'ythee, creature, don't tease me with your fiddle-faddle stuff—I have a thousand things to think of.—Where is the porter? Why has not that booby sent him? What is the meaning——

Re-enter JOHN.

John. Madam, my master is this moment returned with Major Oakly, and my young master, and the lady that was here yesterday.

Mrs Oak. Very well. [*Exit* JOHN.] Returned! yes, truly, he is returned—and in a very extraordinary manner. This is setting me at open defiance. But I'll go down, and shew them I have too much spirit to endure such usage.—[*Going.*]—Or stay—I'll not go amongst his company—I'll go out.——Toilet!

Toil. Ma'am.

Mrs Oak. Order the coach, I'll go out. [TOILET *going.*]——Toilet, stay,—I'll e'en go down to them ——No.——Toilet!

Toil. Ma'am.

Mrs Oak. Order me a boil'd chicken——I'll not go down to dinner. I'll dine in my own room, and sup there——I'll not see his face this three days. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to another Room.*

Enter OAKLY, *Major* OAKLY, CHARLES, *and* HARRIOT.

Char. My dear Harriot, do not make yourself so uneasy.

Har. Alas! I have too much cause for my uneasiness. Who knows what that vile lord has done with my father?

Oak. Be comforted, madam: we shall soon hear of Mr Russet, and all will be well I dare say.

Har. You are too good to me, sir:——But I can assure you, I am not a little concerned on your account as well as my own; and if I did not flatter myself with hopes of explaining every thing to Mrs Oakly's satisfaction, I should never forgive myself for having disturbed the peace of such a worthy family.

Maj. Don't mind that, madam; they'll be very good friends again. This is nothing among married people.———'Sdeath, here she is!—No,—it's only Mrs Toilet.

Enter TOILET.

Oak. Well, Toilet, what now? [TOILET *whispers.*] Not well?—Cann't come down to dinner?—Wants to see me above?——Hark'e, brother, what shall I do?

Maj. If you go, you're undone.

Har. Go, sir; go to Mrs Oakly——Indeed you had better———

Maj. 'Sdeath, brother! don't budge a foot—This is all fractiousness and ill-humour———

Oak. No, I'll not go.—Tell her I have company, and we shall be glad to see her here. [*Exit* TOILET.

Maj. That's right.

Oak. Suppose I go and watch how she proceeds?

Maj. What d'ye mean? You would not go to her? Are you mad?

Oak. By no means go to her—I only want to know how she takes it. I'll lie *perdue* in my study, and observe her motions.

Maj. I don't like this pitiful ambuscade work—this bush-fighting. Why cann't you stay here?——Ay, ay!—I know how it will be——She'll come bounce in upon you with a torrent of anger and passion, or, if necessary, a whole flood of tears, and carry all before her at once.

Oak. You shall find that you're mistaken, major,—Don't imagine that because I wish not to be void of humanity, that I am destitute of resolution. Now I am convinced I'm in the right, I'll support that right with ten times your steadiness.

Maj. You talk this well, brother.

Oak. I'll do it well, brother.

Maj. If you don't, you're undone.

Oak. Never fear, never fear. [*Exit.*

Maj. Well, Charles.

Char. I cann't bear to see my Harriot so uneasy. I'll go immediately in quest of Mr Russet. Perhaps I may learn at the inn where his lordship's ruffians have carried him.

Rus. [*Without.*] Here? Yes, yes, I know she's here well enough. Come along, Sir Harry, come along.

Har. He's here!—My father! I know his voice, Where is Mr Oakly? O now, good sir. [*To the Major.*] Do but pacify him, and you'll be a friend indeed.

Enter RUSSET, *Lord* TRINKET, *and Sir* HARRY BEAGLE.

L. Trink. There, sir,—I told you it was so.

Rus. Ay, ay, it is too plain.——O you provoking slut! Elopement after elopement! And at last to have your father carried off by violence! To endanger my life! Zounds! I am so angry, I dare not trust myself within reach of you.

Char. I can assure you, sir, that your daughter is entirely———

Rus. You assure me? You are the fellow that has perverted her mind———That has set my own child against me———

Char. If you will but hear me, sir———

Rus. I won't hear a word you say. I'll have my daughter——I won't hear a word.

Maj. Nay, Mr Russet, hear reason. If you will but have patience———

Rus. I'll have no patience—I'll have my daughter, and she shall marry Sir Harry to-night.

L. Trink. That is dealing rather too much *en cavalier* with me, Mr Russet, 'pon honour. You take no notice of my pretensions, though my rank and family———

Rus. What care I for rank and family? I don't want to make my daughter a rantipole woman of quality. I'll give her to whom I please. Take her away, Sir Harry; she shall marry you to-night.

Har. For Heaven's sake, sir, hear me but a moment.

Rus. Hold your tongue, girl. Take her away, Sir Harry, take her away.

Char. It must not be.

Maj. Only three words, Mr Russet.———

Rus. Why don't the booby take her?

Sir H. Hold hard! hold hard! You are all on a wrong scent: Hold hard! I say, hold hard!—Hark ye, 'Squire Russet.

Rus. Well! what now?

Sir H. It was proposed, you know, to match me with Miss Harriot——But she cann't take kindly to me.——When one has made a bad bet, it is best to hedge off, you know—and so I have e'en swopped her with Lord Trinket here for his brown horse Nabob, that he bought of Lord Whistle-Jacket for fifteen hundred guineas.

Rus. Swopped her? swopped my daughter for a horse? Zouns, sir, what d'ye mean?

Sir H. Mean? Why I mean to be off, to be sure—It won't do—I tell you it won't do——First of all I knocked up myself and my horses, when they took for London—and now I have been stewed aboard a tender——I have wasted three stone at least——If I could have rid my match, it would not have grieved me——And so, as I said before, I have swopped her for Nabob.

Rus. The devil take Nabob, and yourself and Lord Trinket, and———

L. Trink. Pardon! je vous demande pardon, Monsieur Russet, 'pon honour.

Rus. Death and the devil! I shall go distracted. My daughter plotting against me—the———

Maj. Come, come, Mr Russet, I am your man after all. Give me but a moment's hearing, and I'll engage to make peace between you and your daughter, and throw the blame where it ought to fall most deservedly.

Sir H. Ay, ay, that's right. Put the saddle on the right horse, my buck!

Rus. Well, sir!—What d'ye say?—Speak.———I don't know what to do———

Maj. I'll speak the truth, let who will be offended by it.——I have proof presumptive and positive for you, Mr Russet. From his lordship's behaviour at Lady Freelove's, when my nephew rescued her, we may fairly conclude that he would stick at no measures to carry his point.—There's proof presumptive.—But, sir, we can give you proof positive too—proof under his lordship's own hand, that he, likewise, was the contriver of the gross affront that has just been offered you.

Rus. Hey! how?

L. Trink. Every syllable romance, 'pon honour.

Maj. Gospel, every word on't.

Char. This letter will convince you, sir!—In consequence of what happened at Lady Freelove's, his lordship thought fit to send me a challenge; but the messenger blundered, and gave me this letter instead of it. [*Giving the letter.*] I have the case which inclosed it in my pocket.

L. Trink. Forgery, from beginning to end, 'pon honour.

Maj. Truth, upon my honour.—But read, read, Mr Russet, read and be convinced.

Rus. Let me see—let me see [*Reading*]——Um—um—um—um—so, so!—um—um—um—damnation!—Wish me success—obedient slave—Trinket.—Fire and fury! How dare you do this?

L. Trink. When you are cool, Mr Russet, I will explain this matter to you.

Rus. Cool! 'Sdeath and hell!—I'll never be cool again. I'll be revenged. So, my Harriot, my dear girl, is innocent at last. Say so, my Harriot; tell me you are innocent. [*Embracing her.*

Har. I am indeed, sir; and happy beyond expression, at your being convinced of it.

Rus. I am glad on't—I am glad on't—I believe you, Harriot! You was always a good girl.

Maj. So she is, an excellent girl!—Worth a regiment of such lords and baronets—Come, sir, finish every thing handsomely at once.——Come—Charles will have a handsome fortune.

Rus. Marry!—She durst not do it.

Maj. Consider, sir, they have long been fond of each other—old acquaintance—faithful lovers—turtles—and may be very happy.

Rus. Well, well—since things are so——I love my girl.—Hark'ye, young Oakly, if you don't make her a good husband, you'll break my heart, you rogue.

Char. Do not doubt it, sir! my Harriot has reformed me altogether.

Rus. Has she?—Why then—there—Heaven bless you both—there—now there's an end on't.

Sir H. So, my lord, you and I are both distanced—A hollow thing, damme.

L. Trink. *N'importe.*

Sir H. [*Aside.*] Now this stake is drawn, my lord may be for hedging off mayhap. Ecod! I'll go to Jack Speed's, and secure Nabob, and be out of town in an hour.—Soho! Lady Freelove! yoics! [*Exit.*

Enter Lady FREELOVE.

L. Free. My dear Miss Russet, you'll excuse——

Char. Mrs Oakly, at your ladyship's service.

L. Free. Married?

Har. Not yet, madam; but my father has been so good as to give his consent.

L. Free. I protest I am prodigiously glad of it. My dear, I give you joy—and you, Mr Oakly.—I wish you joy, Mr Russet, and all the good company—for I think the most of them are parties concerned.

Maj. How easy, impudent, and familiar! [*Aside.*

L. Free. Lord Trinket here too! I vow I did not see your lordship before.

L. Trink. Your ladyship's most obedient slave. [*Bowing.*

L. Free. You seem grave, my lord!—Come, come, I know there has been some difference between you and Mr Oakly—You must give me leave to be a mediator in this affair.

L. Trink. Here has been a small fracas to be sure, madam!—We are all blown, 'pon honour.

L. Free. Blown! What do you mean, my lord?

L. Trink. Nay, your ladyship knows that I never mind these things, and I know that they never discompose your ladyship—But things have happened a little *en travers*—The little billet I sent your ladyship has fallen into the hands of that gentleman—[*Pointing to* CHAR.] —and so—there has been a little *brouillerie* about it— that's all.

L. Free. You talk to me, my lord, in a very extraordinary style—If you have been guilty of any misbehaviour, I am sorry for it; but your ill conduct can fasten no imputation on me.—Miss Russet will justify me sufficiently.

Maj. Had not your ladyship better appeal to my friend Charles here?—The letter! Charles! ——Out with it this instant!

Char. Yes, I have the credentials of her ladyship's integrity in my pocket.——Mr Russet, the letter you read a little while ago was inclosed in this cover, which also I now think it my duty to put into your hands.

Rus. [*Reading.*] To the Right Honourable Lady Freelove——'Sdeath and hell!—and now I recollect, the letter itself was pieced with scraps of French, and madam, and your ladyship—Fire and fury! madam, how came you to use me so? I am obliged to you then for the insult that has been offered me.

L. Free. What is all this? Your obligations to me, Mr Russet, are of a nature that——

Rus. Fine obligations! I dare say I am partly obliged to you too for the attempt on my daughter, by that thing of a lord yonder at your house. Zounds! madam, these are injuries never to be forgiven——They are the grossest affronts to me and my family—All the world shall know them—Zounds!—I'll——

L. Free. Mercy on me! how boisterous are these country gentlemen! Why really, Mr Russet, you rave like a man in Bedlam—I am afraid you'll beat me—and then you swear most abominably.——How can you be so vulgar?——I see the meaning of this low malice——But the reputations of women of quality are not so easily impeached—My rank places me above the scandal of little people, and I shall meet such petty insolence with the greatest ease and tranquillity. But you and your simple girl will be the sufferers. ——I had some thoughts of introducing her into the first company—But now, madam, I shall neither receive nor return your visits, and will entirely withdraw my protection from the ordinary part of the family. [*Exit.*

Rus. Zouns, what impudence! that's worse than all the rest.

L. Trink. Fine presence of mind, faith!—The true French *nonchalance*—But, good folks, why such a deal of rout and *topage* about nothing at all?——If Mademoiselle Harriot had rather be Mrs Oakly than Lady Trinket——Why—I wish her joy, that's all.—Mr Russet, I wish you joy of your son-in-law—Mr Oakly, I wish you joy of the lady—and you, madam, [*To* HARRIOT.] of the gentleman——And, in short, I wish you all joy of one another, 'pon honour! [*Exit.*

Rus. There's a fine fellow of a lord now! The devil's in your London folks of the first fashion, as you call them. They will rob you of your estate, debauch your daughter, or lie with your wife —and all as if they were doing you a favour—— 'pon honour!—

Maj. Hey! what now? [*Bell rings violently.*

Enter OAKLY.

Oak. D'ye hear, major, d'ye hear?

Maj. Zouns! what a clatter!——She'll pull down all the bells in the house.

Oak. My observations since I left you have confirmed my resolution. I see plainly, that her good-humour, and her ill-humour, her smiles, her tears, and her fits, are all calculated to play upon me.

Maj. Did not I always tell you so? It's the way with them all———they will be rough and smooth, and hot and cold, and all in a breath.—Any thing to get the better of us.

Oak. She is in all moods at present, I promise you—I am at once angry and ashamed of her; and yet she is so ridiculous I cann't help laughing at her——There has she been in her chamber, fuming and fretting, and dispatching a messenger to me every two minutes—servant after servant—now she insists on my coming to her—now again she writes a note to entreat——then Toilet is sent to let me know that she is ill, absolutely dying—then, the very next minute, she'll

never see my face again—she'll go out of the house directly. [*Bell rings.*] Again! now the storm rises!—

Maj. It will soon drive this way then—now, brother, prove yourself a man—You have gone too far to retreat.

Oak. Retreat!—Retreat!—No, no!—I'll preserve the advantage I have gained, I am determined.

Maj. Ay, ay!—keep your ground!—fear nothing—up with your noble heart! Good discipline makes good soldiers; stick close to my advice, and you may stand buff to a tigress——

Oak. Here she is, by heavens!—now, brother!

Maj. And now, brother—Now or never!

Enter Mrs OAKLY.

Mrs Oak. I think, Mr Oakly, you might have had humanity enough to have come to see how I did. You have taken your leave, I suppose, of all tenderness and affection—but I'll be calm—I'll not throw myself into a passion—you want to drive me out of your house——I see what you aim at, and will be aforehand with you—let me keep my temper! I'll send for a chair, and leave the house this instant.

Oak. True, my love! I knew you would not think of dining in your own chamber alone, when I had company below. You shall sit at the head of the table, as you ought to be sure, as you say, and make my friends welcome.

Mrs Oak. Excellent raillery! Look ye, Mr Oakly, I see the meaning of all this affected coolness and indifference.

Oak. My dear, consider where you are——

Mrs Oak. You would be glad, I find, to get me out of your house, and have all your flirts about you.

Oak. Before all this company! Fie!

Mrs Oak. But I'll disappoint you, for I shall remain in it to support my due authority—As for you, Major Oakly!—

Maj. Hey-day! What have I done?

Mrs Oak. I think you might find better employment, than to create divisions between married people—And you, sir——

Oak. Nay, but, my dear!——

Mrs Oak. Might have more sense, as well as tenderness, than to give ear to such idle stuff—

Oak. Lord, lord!

Mrs Oak. You and your wise counsellor there, I suppose, think to carry all your points with me—

Oak. Was ever any thing——

Mrs Oak. But it won't do, sir. You shall find that I will have my own way, and that I will govern my own family.

Oak. You had better learn to govern yourself by half. Your passion makes you ridiculous. Did ever any body see so much fury and violence? affronting your best friends, breaking my peace, and disconcerting your own temper. And all for what? For nothing. 'Sdeath, madam! at these years you ought to know better.

Mrs Oak. At these years!—Very fine!—Am I to be talked to in this manner?

Oak. Talked to!——Why not?——You have talked to me long enough—almost talked me to death—and I have taken it all in hopes of making you quiet—but all in vain; for the more one bears, the worse you are. Patience, I find, is all thrown away upon you; and henceforward, come what may, I am resolved to be master of my own house.

Mrs Oak. So, so!—Master, indeed!——Yes, sir, and you'll take care to have mistresses enough too, I warrant you.

Oak. Perhaps I may; but they shall be quiet ones, I can assure you.

Mrs Oak. Indeed!—And do you think I am such a tame fool as to sit quietly, and bear all this? You shall know, sir, that I will resent this behaviour—You shall find that I have a spirit——

Oak. Of the devil.

Mrs Oak. Intolerable!—You shall find then that I will exert that spirit. I am sure I have need of it. As soon as the house is once cleared again, I'll shut my doors against all company.—You sha'n't see a single soul for this month.

Oak. 'Sdeath, madam, but I will!—I'll keep open house for a year.—I'll send cards to the whole town—Mr Oakly's route!—All the world will come—and I'll go among the world too——I'll be mew'd up no longer.

Mrs Oak. Provoking insolence! This is not to be endured—Look'e, Mr Oakly—

Oak. And look'e, Mrs Oakly, I will have my own way.

Mrs Oak. Nay then, let me tell you, sir——

Oak. And let me tell you, madam, I will not be crossed——I wont be made a fool.

Mrs Oak. Why, you won't let me speak.

Oak. Why, you don't speak as you ought. Madam, madam! you sh'an't look, nor walk, nor talk, nor think, but as I please.

Mrs Oak. Was there ever such a monster! I can bear this no longer. [*Bursts into tears.*] O you vile man! I can see through your design—you cruel, barbarous, inhuman——such usage to your poor wife!——you'll be the death of her.

Oak. She sha'n't be the death of me, I am determined.

Mrs Oak. That it should ever come to this!——To be contradicted—[*Sobbing*]—insulted—abused—hated——'tis too much—my heart will burst with—oh—oh!——[*Falls into a fit.* HARRIOT, CHARLES, *&c. run to her assistance.*]

Oak. [*Interposing.*] Let her alone.

Har. Sir, Mrs Oakly——

Char. For Heaven's sake, sir, she will be——

Oak. Let her alone, I say; I won't have her touched—let her alone—if her passions throw her into fits, let the strength of them carry her through them.

Har. Pray, my dear sir, let us assist her. She may——

Oak. I don't care—you sha'n't touch her—let her bear them patiently—she'll learn to behave better another time.——Let her alone, I say.

Mrs Oak. [*Rising.*] O you monster!——you villain!—you base man!——Would you let me die for want of help?—would you——

Oak. Bless me, madam! your fit is very violent—take care of yourself.

Mrs Oak. Despised, ridiculed—but I'll be revenged—you shall see, sir—

Oak. *Tol-de-rol loll-de-rol loll-de-rol loll.* [*Singing.*

Mrs Oak. What, am I made a jest of? Exposed to all the world?—If there's law or justice—

Oak. *Tol-de-rol loll-de-rol loll-de-rol loll.* [*Singing.*

Mrs Oak. I shall burst with anger.——Have a care, sir, you may repent this.——Scorned and made ridiculous!—No power on earth shall hinder my revenge! [*Going.*

Har. [*Interposing.*] Stay, madam.

Mrs Oak. Let me go. I cannot bear this place.

Har. Let me beseech you, madam.

Oak. What does the girl mean? [*Apart.*

Maj. Courage, brother! you have done wonders. [*Apart.*

Oak. I think she'll have no more fits. [*Apart.*

Har. Stay, madam.—Pray stay but one moment. I have been a painful witness of your uneasiness, and in great part the innocent occasion of it. Give me leave then—

Mrs Oak. I did not expect indeed to have found you here again. But however—

Har. I see the agitation of your mind, and it makes me miserable. Suffer me to tell you the real truth. I can explain every thing to your satisfaction.

Mrs Oak. May be so—I cannot argue with you.

Char. Pray, madam, hear her—for my sake—for your own—dear madam!

Mrs Oak. Well—well—proceed.

Oak. I shall relapse,—I cann't bear to see her so uneasy. [*Apart.*

Maj. Hush!—Hush! [*Apart.*

Har. I understand, madam, that your first alarm was occasioned by a letter from my father to your nephew.

Rus. I was in a bloody passion to be sure, madam!—The letter was not over civil, I believe—I did not know but the young rogue had ruined my girl.—But it's all over now, and so——

Mrs Oak. You was here yesterday, sir?

Rus. Yes, I came after Harriot. I thought I should find my young madam with my young sir, here.

Mrs Oak. With Charles, did you say, sir?

Rus. Ay, with Charles, madam! The young rogue has been fond of her a long time, and she of him, it seems.

Mrs Oak. I fear I have been to blame. [*Aside.*

Rus. I ask pardon, madam, for the disturbance I made in your house.

Har. And the abrupt manner in which I came into it demands a thousand apologies. But the occasion must be my excuse.

Mrs Oak. How have I been mistaken! [*Aside.*] —But did not I overhear you and Mr Oakly— [*To* HARRIOT.

Har. Dear madam! you had but a partial hearing of our conversation. It related entirely to this gentleman.

Char. To put it beyond doubt, madam, Mr Russet and my guardian have consented to our marriage; and we are in hopes that you will not withhold your approbation.

Mrs Oak. I have no further doubt—I see you are innocent, and it was cruel to suspect you—You have taken a load of anguish off my mind—and yet your kind interposition comes too late—Mr Oakly's love for me is entirely destroyed. [*Weeping.*

Oak. I must go to her—— [*Apart.*

Maj. Not yet!—not yet! [*Apart.*

Har. Do not disturb yourself with such apprehensions; I am sure Mr Oakly loves you most affectionately.

Oak. I can hold no longer. [*Going to her.*] My affection for you, madam, is as warm as ever. Nothing can ever extinguish it. My constrained behaviour cut me to the soul—For within these few hours it has been all constrained—and it was with the utmost difficulty that I was able to support it.

Mrs Oak. O, Mr Oakly, how have I exposed myself! What low arts has my jealousy induced me to practise! I see my folly, and fear that you can never forgive me.

Oak. Forgive you!——You are too good, my love!—Forgive you!—Can you forgive me?—— This change transports me.—Brother! Mr Russet! Charles! Harriot! give me joy!—I am the happiest man in the world.

Maj. Joy, much joy to you both! though, by-the-bye, you are not a little obliged to me for it. Did not I tell you I would cure all the disorders in your family? I beg pardon, sister, for taking the liberty to prescribe for you. My medicines have been somewhat rough, I believe, but they have had an admirable effect, and so don't be angry with your physician.

Mrs Oak. I am indeed obliged to you, and I feel—

Oak. Nay, my dear, no more of this. All that's past must be utterly forgotten.

Mrs Oak. I have not merited this kindness, but it shall hereafter be my study to deserve it. Away with all idle jealousies! And since my suspicions have hitherto been groundless, I am resolved for the future never to suspect at all.

[*Exeunt.*

EPILOGUE.

LADIES! I've had a squabble with the poet——
About his characters—and you shall know it.
Young man, said I, restrain your saucy satire!
My part's ridiculous—false—out of nature.
Fine draughts indeed of ladies! sure you hate 'em!
Why, sir!——My part is *scandalum magnatum.*
"Lord, ma'am," said he, "to copy life my trade is,
And poets ever have made free with ladies:
One Simon—the deuce take such names as these!
A hard Greek name——O—ay—Simonides—
He shew'd—our freaks, this whim and that desire.
Rose first from earth, sea, air; nay, some from fire;
Or that we owe our persons, minds, and features
To birds, forsooth, and filthy four-legg'd creatures.
"The dame, of manners various, temper fickle,
Now all for pleasure, now the conventicle!
Who prays, then raves, now calm, now all commotion,
Rises another Venus from the ocean.
"Constant at every sale, the curious fair,
Who longs for Dresden, and old China ware;
Who dotes on pagods, and gives up vile man
For niddle-noddle figures from Japan;
Critic in jars and josses, shews her birth
Drawn, like the brittle ware itself, from earth.
The flaunting she, so stately, rich, and vain,
Who gains her conquests by her length of train;
While all her vanity is under sail,
Sweeps a proud peacock, with a gaudy tail.
"Husband and wife, with sweets! and dears! and loves!
What are they but a pair of cooing doves?
But seiz'd with spleen, fits, humours, and all that,
Your dove and turtle turn to dog and cat.
"The gossip, prude, old maid, coquette, and trapes,
Are parrots, foxes, magpies, wasps, and apes;
But she, with ev'ry charm of form and mind,
Oh! she's—sweet soul!—the phœnix of her kind."
This his apology!—'Tis rank abuse———
A fresh affront, instead of an excuse!
His own sex rather such description suits:
Why don't he draw their characters——The brutes!
Ay, let him paint those ugly monsters, men!
Mean time——mend we our lives, he'll mend his pen.

THE

CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE.

BY

G. COLMAN AND D. GARRICK.

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY MR GARRICK.

Spoken by Mr Holland.

POETS and Painters, who from nature draw
Their best and richest stores, have made this law:
That each should neighbourly assist his brother,
And steal with decency from one another.
To-night, your matchless Hogarth gives the thought,
Which from his canvas to the stage is brought.
And who so fit to warm the poet's mind,
As he who pictured morals and mankind?
But not the same their characters and scenes;
Both labour for one end, by different means;
Each, as it suits him, takes a separate road,
Their one great object, MARRIAGE-A-LA-MODE!
Where titles deign with cits to have and hold,
And change rich blood for more substantial gold;
And honour'd trade from interest turns aside,
To hazard happiness for titled pride.
The Painter dead, yet still he charms the eye;
While England lives, his fame can never die:
But he, who *struts his hour upon the stage*,
Can scarce extend his fame for half an age;
Nor pen nor pencil can the actor save,
The art and artist share one common grave.
O let me drop one tributary tear,
On poor Jack Falstaff's grave and Juliet's bier!
You to their worth must testimony give;
'Tis in your hearts alone their fame can live.
Still as the scenes of life will shift away,
The strong impressions of their art decay.
Your children cannot feel what you have known;
They'll boast of Quins and Cibbers of their own:
The greatest glory of our happy few,
Is to be felt, and be approved by YOU.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Lord OGLEBY.
Sir JOHN MELVIL.
STERLING.
LOVEWELL.
CANTON.
BRUSH.
Serjeant FLOWER.
TRAVERSE.
TRUEMAN.

WOMEN.

Mrs HEIDELBERG.
Miss STERLING.
FANNY.
BETTY.
Chambermaid.
TRUSTY.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* STERLING'S *House.*—*Miss* FANNY *and* BETTY *meeting.*

Bet. [*Running in.*] Ma'am! Miss Fanny! ma'am!

Fan. What is the matter, Betty?

Bet. Oh la! ma'am! as sure as I am alive, here is your husband—

Fan. Hush! my dear Betty! if any body in the house should hear you, I am ruined.

Bet. Mercy on me! it has frightened me to such a degree that my heart is come up to my mouth.—But as I was saying, ma'am, here's that dear, sweet—

Fan. Have a care! Betty.

Bet. Lord! I am bewitched, I think.—But as I was a-saying, ma'am, here's Mr Lovewell just come from London.

Fan. Indeed!

Bet. Yes, indeed and indeed, ma'am, he is. I saw him crossing the court-yard in his boots.

Fan. I am glad to hear it.—But pray now, my dear Betty, be cautious. Don't mention that word again, on any account. You know, we have agreed never to drop any expressions of that sort, for fear of an accident.

Bet. Dear ma'am, you may depend upon me. There is not a more trustier creature on the face of the earth than I am. Though I say it, I am as secret as the grave—and if it is never told till I tell it, it may remain untold till doom's-day for Betty.

Fan. I know you are faithful—but in our circumstances we cannot be too careful.

Bet. Very true, ma'am! and yet I vow and protest, there's more plague than pleasure with a secret; especially if a body mayn't mention it to four or five of one's particular acquaintance.

Fan. Do but keep this secret a little while longer, and then, I hope, you may mention it to any body.—Mr Lovewell will acquaint the family with the nature of our situation as soon as possible.

Bet. The sooner the better, I believe: for if he does not tell it, there's a little tell-tale, I know of, will come and tell it for him.

Fan. Fie, Betty. [*Blushing.*

Bet. Ah! you may well blush. But you're not so sick, and so pale, and so wan, and so many qualms—

Fan. Have done! I shall be quite angry with you.

Bet. Angry!—Bless the dear puppet! I am sure I shall love it, as much as if it was my own.—I meant no harm, Heaven knows.

Fan. Well, say no more of this—It makes me uneasy—All I have to ask of you, is to be faithful and secret, and not to reveal this matter, till we disclose it to the family ourselves.

Bet. Me reveal it!—If I say a word, I wish I may be burned. I would not do you any harm for the world—And as for Mr Lovewell, I am sure I have loved the dear gentleman ever since he got a tide-waiter's place for my brother—But let me tell you both, you must leave off your soft looks to each other, and your whispers, and your glances, and your always sitting next to one another at dinner, and your long walks together in the evening.—For my part, if I had not been in the secret, I should have known you were a pair of lovers at least, if not man and wife, as—

Fan. See there now! again. Pray be careful.

Bet. Well—well—nobody hears me. Man and wife. I'll say no more—what I tell you is very true for all that.

Lov. [*Calling within.*] William!

Bet. Hark! I hear your husband.

Fan. What!

Bet. I say, here comes Mr Lovewell—Mind the caution I give you—I'll be whipped now, if you are not the first person he sees or speaks to in the family. However, if you choose it, it's nothing at all to me,—as you sow, so you must reap—as you brew, so you must bake. I'll e'en slip down the back-stairs, and leave you together. [*Exit.*

Fan. I see, I see I shall never have a moment's ease till our marriage is made public. New distresses crowd in upon me every day. The solicitude of my mind sinks my spirits, preys upon my health, and destroys every comfort of my life. It shall be revealed, let what will be the consequence.

Enter LOVEWELL.

Lov. My love!—How's this!—In tears?—Indeed this is too much. You promised me to support your spirits, and to wait the determination of our fortune with patience. For my sake, for your own, be comforted! Why will you study to add to our uneasiness and perplexity?

Fan. Oh, Mr Lovewell! the indelicacy of a secret marriage grows every day more and more shocking to me. I walk about the house like a guilty wretch: I imagine myself the object of the suspicion of the whole family; and am under the perpetual terrors of a shameful detection.

Lov. Indeed, indeed, you are to blame. The amiable delicacy of your temper, and your quick sensibility, only serve to make you unhappy. To clear up this affair properly to Mr Sterling, is the continual employment of my thoughts. Every thing now is in a fair train—It begins to grow ripe for a discovery; and I have no doubt of its concluding to the satisfaction of ourselves, of your father, and the whole family.

Fan. End how it will, I am resolved it shall end soon—very soon. I would not live another week in this agony of mind to be mistress of the universe.

Lov. Do not be too violent neither. Do not

let us disturb the joy of your sister's marriage with the tumult this matter may occasion!—I have brought letters from Lord Ogleby and Sir John Melvil to Mr Sterling. They will be here this evening—and, I dare say, within this hour.

Fan. I am sorry for it.

Lov. Why so?

Fan. No matter—Only let us disclose our marriage immediately!

Lov. As soon as possible.

Fan. But directly.

Lov. In a few days, you may depend upon it.

Fan. To-night—or to-morrow morning.

Lov. That, I fear, will be impracticable.

Fan. Nay, but you must.

Lov. Must! Why?

Fan. Indeed you must.——I have the most alarming reasons for it.

Lov. Alarming indeed! for they alarm me, even before I am acquainted with them—What are they?

Fan. I cannot tell you.

Lov. Not tell me?

Fan. Not at present. When all is settled, you shall be acquainted with every thing.

Lov. Sorry they are coming!—Must be discovered!—What can this mean? Is it possible you can have any reasons that need be concealed from me?

Fan. Do not disturb yourself with conjectures ——but rest assured, that, though you are unable to divine the cause, the consequence of a discovery, be it what it will, cannot be attended with half the miseries of the present interval.

Lov. You put me upon the rack.—I would do any thing to make you easy.—But you know your father's temper.—Money (you will excuse my frankness) is the spring of all his actions, which nothing but the idea of acquiring nobility or magnificence, can ever make him forego—and these he thinks his money will purchase.—You know too your aunt's, Mrs Heidelberg's, notions of the splendour of high life; her contempt for every thing that does not relish of what she calls quality; and that from the vast fortune in her hands, by her late husband, she absolutely governs Mr Sterling and the whole family: now if they should come to the knowledge of this affair too abruptly, they might, perhaps, be incensed beyond all hopes of reconciliation.

Fan. But if they are made acquainted with it otherwise than by ourselves, it will be ten times worse: and a discovery grows every day more probable. The whole family have long suspected our affection. We are also in the power of a foolish maid-servant; and, if we may even depend on her fidelity, we cannot answer for her discretion.—Discover it, therefore, immediately, lest some accident should bring it to light, and involve us in additional disgrace.

Lov. Well—well—I mean to discover it soon, but would not do it too precipitately. I have more than once sounded Mr Sterling about it, and will attempt him more seriously the next opportunity. But my principal hopes are these.—My relationship to Lord Ogleby, and his having placed me with your father, have been, you know, the first links in the chain of this connection between the two families; in consequence of which, I am at present in high favour with all parties: while they all remain thus well affected to me, I propose to lay our case before the old lord; and if I can prevail on him to mediate in this affair, I make no doubt but he will be able to appease your father; and, being a lord and a man of quality, I am sure he may bring Mrs Heidelberg into good humour at any time.——Let me beg you, therefore, to have but a little patience, as, you see, we are upon the very eve of a discovery, that must probably be to our advantage.

Fan. Manage it your own way. I am persuaded.

Lov. But in the mean time make yourself easy.

Fan. As easy as I can, I will.——We had better not remain together any longer at present.—Think of this business, and let me know how you proceed.

Lov. Depend on my care! But, pray, be cheerful.

Fan. I will.

As she is going out, enter Sterling.

Sterl. Hey-day! who have we got here?

Fan. [*Confused.*] Mr Lovewell, sir!

Sterl. And where are you going, hussy?

Fan. To my sister's chamber, sir! [*Exit.*

Sterl. Ah, Lovewell! What! always getting my foolish girl yonder into a corner?—Well—well—let us but once see her eldest sister fast married to Sir John Melvil, we'll soon provide a good husband for Fanny, I warrant you.

Lov. Would to Heaven, sir, you would provide her one of my recommendation!

Sterl. Yourself! eh, Lovewell?

Lov. With your pleasure, sir.

Sterl. Mighty well!

Lov. And I flatter myself, that such a proposal would not be very disagreeable to Miss Fanny.

Sterl. Better and better!

Lov. And if I could but obtain your consent, sir——

Sterl. What! you marry Fanny!—no—no—that will never do, Lovewell!——You're a good boy, to be sure—I have a great value for you—— but cann't think of you for a son-in-law.—There's no stuff in the case; no money, Lovewell!

Lov. My pretensions to fortune, indeed, are but moderate; but, though not equal to splendour, sufficient to keep us above distress.—Add to which, that I hope by diligence to increase it—and have love, honour——

Sterl. But not the stuff, Lovewell!—Add one little round o to the sum total of your fortune, and that will be the finest thing you can say to me.—You know I've a regard for you—would do any thing to serve you—any thing on the footing of friendship—but—

Lov. If you think me worthy of your friendship, sir, be assured, that there is no instance in which I should rate your friendship so highly,

Sterl. Psha! psha! that's another thing, you know.—Where money or interest is concerned, friendship is quite out of the question.

Lov. But where the happiness of a daughter is at stake, you would not scruple, sure, to sacrifice a little to her inclinations.

Sterl. Inclinations! why, you would not persuade me that the girl is in love with you——eh, Lovewell?

Lov. I cannot absolutely answer for Miss Fanny, sir; but am sure that the chief happiness or misery of my life depends entirely upon her.

Sterl. Why, indeed, now if your kinsman, Lord Ogleby, would come down handsomely for you—but that's impossible—No, no—'twill never do—I must hear no more of this—Come, Lovewell, promise me that I shall hear no more of this.

Lov. [*Hesitating.*] I am afraid, sir, I should not be able to keep my word with you, if I did promise you.

Sterl. Why you would not offer to marry her without my consent, would you, Lovewell?

Lov. Marry her, sir! [*Confused.*

Sterl. Ay, marry her, sir!—I know very well that a warm speech or two from such a dangerous young spark as you are, would go much farther towards persuading a silly girl to do what she has more than a month's mind to do, than twenty grave lectures from fathers or mothers, or uncles or aunts, to prevent her. But you would not, sure, be such a base fellow, such a treacherous young rogue, as to seduce my daughter's affections, and destroy the peace of my family in that manner.—I must insist on it, that you give me your word not to marry her without my consent.

Lov. Sir—I—I—as to that—I—I—beg, sir—Pray, sir, excuse me on this subject at present.

Sterl. Promise then, that you will carry this matter no farther without my approbation.

Lov. You may depend on it, sir, that it shall go no farther.

Sterl. Well—well—that's enough—I'll take care of the rest, I warrant you.—Come, come, let's have done with this nonsense!—What's doing in town? Any news upon 'Change?

Lov. Nothing material.

Sterl. Have you seen the currants, the soap, and Madeira safe in the warehouses? Have you compared the goods with the invoice and bills of lading, and are they all right?

Lov. They are, sir.

Sterl. And how are stocks?

Lov. Fell one and a half this morning.

Sterl. Well, well,—some good news from America, and they'll be up again.—But how are Lord Ogleby and Sir John Melvil? When are we to expect them?

Lov. Very soon, sir. I came on purpose to bring you their commands. Here are letters from both of them. [*Giving letters.*

Sterl. Let me see—let me see—'Slife, how his lordship's letter is perfumed!—It takes my breath away. [*Opening it.*] And French paper too! with a fine border of flowers and flourishes—and a slippery gloss on it that dazzles one's eyes. 'My dear Mr Sterling.' [*Reading.*] Mercy on me! his lordship writes a worse hand than a boy at his exercise.—But how's this?—Eh!—'with you to-night'—[*Reading.*]—'Lawyers to-morrow morning'—To-night!—that's sudden, indeed—Where's my sister Heidelberg? she should know of this immediately.——Here, John! Harry! Thomas! [*Calling the servants.*] Hark ye, Lovewell!

Lov. Sir.

Sterl. Mind now, how I'll entertain his lordship and Sir John——We'll shew your fellows at the other end of the town how we live in the city—They shall eat gold—and drink gold—and lie in gold.——Here, cook! butler! [*Calling.*] What signifies your birth, and education, and titles!——Money, money!——that's the stuff that makes the great man in this country.

Lov. Very true, sir.

Sterl. True, sir!—Why then, have done with your nonsense of love and matrimony. You're not rich enough to think of a wife yet. A man of business should mind nothing but his business.—Where are these fellows?—John! Thomas! [*Calling.*]—Get an estate, and a wife will follow of course.——Ah, Lovewell! an English merchant is the most respectable character in the universe.—'Slife, man, a rich English merchant may make himself a match for the daughter of a nabob.—Where are all my rascals? Here, William! [*Exit, calling.*

Lov. So—as I suspected.——Quite averse to the match, and likely to receive the news of it with great displeasure.—What's best to be done?—Let me see!—Suppose I get Sir John Melvil to interest himself in this affair. He may mention it to Lord Ogleby with a better grace than I can, and more probably prevail on him to interfere in it. I can open my mind also more freely to Sir John. He told me, when I left him in town, that he had something of consequence to communicate, and that I could be of use to him. I am glad of it: for the confidence he reposes in me, and the service I may do him, will ensure me his good offices.——Poor Fanny! It hurts me to see her so uneasy, and her making a mystery of the cause adds to my anxiety.—Something must be done upon her account; for, at all events, her solicitude shall be removed. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to another Apartment.*

Enter Miss STERLING *and Miss* FANNY.

Miss Sterl. Oh, my dear sister, say no more! This is downright hypocrisy. You shall never convince me that you don't envy me beyond measure. Well, after all, it is extremely natural. It is impossible to be angry with you.

Fan. Indeed, sister, you have no cause.

Miss Sterl. And you really pretend not to envy me?

Fan. Not in the least.

Miss Sterl. And you don't in the least wish that you was just in my situation?

Fan. No, indeed, I don't. Why should I?

Miss Sterl. Why should you? What! on the

brink of marriage, fortune, title—But I had forgot —There's that dear sweet creature, Mr Lovewell, in the case. You would not break your faith with your true love now for the world, I warrant you.

Fan. Mr Lovewell !—always Mr Lovewell !—Lord, what signifies Mr Lovewell, sister ?

Miss Sterl. Pretty peevish soul !—Oh, my dear grave, romantic sister !—a perfect philosopher in petticoats !—Love and a cottage !—Eh, Fanny—Ah, give me indifference and a coach and six !——

Fan. And why not the coach and six without the indifference ?—But pray, when is this happy marriage of yours to be celebrated ? I long to give you joy.

Miss. Sterl. In a day or two—I cannot tell exactly—Oh, my dear sister !—I must mortify her a little. [*Aside.*] I know you have a pretty taste. Pray, give me your opinion of my jewels.—How do you like the style of this esclavage?

[*Shewing jewels.*

Fan. Extremely handsome, indeed, and well fancied.

Miss Sterl. What d'ye think of these bracelets ? I shall have a miniature of my father set round with diamonds to one, and Sir John's to the other. —And this pair of ear-rings ! set transparent ! here, the tops, you see, will take off to wear in a morning, or in an undress—How d'ye like them ?

[*Shews jewels.*

Fan. Very much, I assure you—Bless me, sister, you have a prodigious quantity of jewels—you'll be the very queen of diamonds.

Miss Sterl. Ha, ha, ha ! very well, my dear !—I shall be as fine as a little queen, indeed.—I have a bouquet to come home to-morrow—made up of diamonds and rubies, and emeralds, and topazes, and amethysts—jewels of all colours, green, red, blue, yellow, intermixt—the prettiest thing you ever saw in your life !—The jeweller says, I shall set out with as many diamonds as any body in town, except Lady Brilliant, and Polly What d'ye call it, Lord Squander's kept mistress.

Fan. But what are your wedding clothes, sister ?

Miss Sterl. Oh, white and silver to be sure, you know.—I bought them at Sir Joseph Lutestring's, and sat above an hour in the parlour behind the shop, consulting Lady Lutestring about gold and silver stuffs, on purpose to mortify her.

Fan. Fie, sister ! how could you be so abominably provoking ?

Miss Sterl. Oh, I have no patience with the pride of your city-knights' ladies.—Did you ever observe the airs of Lady Lutestring, drest in the richest brocade out of her husband's shop, playing crown whist at Haberdasher's Hall ; whilst the civil smirking Sir Joseph, with a snug wig trimmed round his broad face as close as a new-cut yew-hedge, and his shoes so black that they shine again, stands all day in his shop, fastened to his counter like a bad shilling ?

Fan. Indeed, indeed, sister, this is too much—If you talk at this rate, you will be absolutely a bye-word in the city—You must never venture on the inside of Temple Bar again.

Miss Sterl. Never do I desire it—never, my dear Fanny, I promise you. Oh, how I long to be transported to the dear regions of Grosvenor-square—far—far from the dull districts of Aldersgate, Cheap, Candlewick, and Farringdon Without and Within—my heart goes pit-a-pat at the very idea of being introduced at court ! Gilt chariot ! pye-bald horses !—laced liveries !—and then the whispers buzzing round the circle—'Who is that young lady ? Who is she?'—'Lady Melvil, ma'am !' ——Lady Melvil ! My ears tingle at the sound. —And then at dinner, instead of my father perpetually asking—'Any news upon 'Change ?'—to cry, Well, Sir John ! any thing new from Arthur's ?—or—to say to some other woman of quality, Was your ladyship at the Duchess of Rubber's last night ?—Did you call in at Lady Thunder's ? In the immensity of crowd I swear I did not see you—scarce a soul at the opera last Saturday—shall I see you at Carlisle House next Thursday ?—Oh, the dear Beau Monde ! I was born to move in the sphere of the great world.

Fan. And so, in the midst of all this happiness, you have no compassion for me—no pity for us poor mortals in common life.

Miss Sterl. [*Affectedly.*] You !—You're above pity—You would not change conditions with me. —You're over head and ears in love, you know. —Nay, for that matter, if Mr Lovewell and you come together, as I doubt not you will, you will live very comfortably, I dare say.—He will mind his business—you'll employ yourself in the delightful care of your family—and once in a season perhaps you'll sit together in a front box at a benefit play, as we used to do at our dancing-master's, you know—and perhaps I may meet you in the summer with some other citizens at Tunbridge. For my part, I shall always entertain a proper regard for my relations.—You sha'n't want my countenance, I assure you.

Fan. Oh, you're too kind, sister !

Enter Mrs Heidelberg.

Mrs Heidel. [*At entering.*] Here this evening ! —I vow and pertest we shall scarce have time to provide for them—Oh, my dear ! [*To Miss* Sterl.] I am glad to see you're not quite in a dishabille. Lord Ogleby and Sir John Melvil will be here to-night.

Miss Sterl. To-night, ma'am ?

Mrs Heidel. Yes, my dear, to-night—Oh, put on a smarter cap, and change those ordinary ruffles !—Lord, I have such a deal to do, I shall scarce have time to slip on my Italian lutestring.—Where is this dawdle of a housekeeper ? [*Enter Mrs* Trusty.] Oh, here, Trusty ! do you know that people of qualaty are expected here this evening ?

Trus. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs Heidel. Well—Do you be sure now that every thing is done in the most genteelest manner —and to the honour of the famaly.

Trus. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs Heidel. Well—but mind what I say to you,

Trus. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs Heidel. His lordship is to lie in the chintz bed-chamber—d'ye hear?—and Sir John in the blue damask room—his lordship's valet-de-shamb in the opposite———

Trus. But Mr Lovewell is come down—and you know that's his room, ma'am.

Mrs Heidel. Well—well—Mr Lovewell may make shift—or get a bed at the George.——But hark ye, Trusty!

Trus. Ma'am!

Mrs Heidel. Get the great dining-room in order as soon as possable. Unpaper the curtains, take the civers off the couch and the chairs, and put the china figures on the mantle-piece immediately.

Trus. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs Heidel. Be gone then! fly, this instant! ——Where's my brother Sterling?

Trus. Talking to the butler, ma'am.

Mrs Heidel. Very well. [*Exit* TRUSTY.] Miss Fanny! I pertest I did not see you before—— Lord, child, what's the matter with you?

Fan. With me! Nothing, ma'am.

Mrs Heidel. Bless me! Why your face is as pale, and black, and yellow—of fifty colours, I pertest.——And then you have drest yourself as loose and as big——I declare there is not such a thing to be seen now, as a young woman with a fine waist——You all make yourselves as round as Mrs Deputy Barter. Go, child!——You know the qualaty will be here by and by.—Go, and make yourself a little more fit to be seen. [*Exit* FANNY.] She is gone away in tears—absolutely crying, I vow and pertest.——This ridicalous love! we must put a stop to it. It makes a perfect nataral of the girl.

Miss Sterl. Poor soul! she cann't help it. [*Affectedly.*

Mrs Heidel. Well, my dear! Now I shall have an opportunity of convincing you of the absurdity of what you was telling me concerning Sir John Melvil's behaviour to you.

Miss Sterl. Oh, it gives me no manner of uneasiness. But, indeed, ma'am, I cannot be persuaded but that Sir John is an extremely cold lover. Such distant civility, grave looks, and lukewarm professions of esteem for me and the whole family! I have heard of flames and darts, but Sir John's is a passion of mere ice and snow.

Miss Heidel. Oh fie, my dear! I am perfectly ashamed of you. That's so like the notions of your poor sister! What you complain of as coldness and indiffarance, is nothing but the extreme gentilaty of his address, an exact pictur of the manners of qualaty.

Miss Sterl. Oh, he is the very mirror of complaisance! full of formal bows and set speeches! ——I declare, if there was any violent passion on my side, I should be quite jealous of him.

Mrs Heidel. I say jealus indeed——Jealus of who, pray?

Miss Sterl. My sister Fanny. She seems a much greater favourite than I am, and he pays her infinitely more attention, I assure you.

Mrs Heidel. Lord! d'ye think a man of fashion, as he is, cannot distinguish between the genteel and the vulgar part of the famaly!——Between you and your sister, for instance—or me and my brother?——Be advised by me, child! It is all puliteness and good-breeding. Nobody knows the qualaty better than I do.

Miss Sterl. In my mind, the old lord, his uncle, has ten times more gallantry about him than Sir John. He is full of attentions to the ladies, and smiles, and grins, and leers, and ogles, and fills every wrinkle of his old wizen face with comical expressions of tenderness. I think he would make an admirable sweetheart.

Enter STERLING.

Sterl. [*At entering.*] No fish!—Why the pond was dragged but yesterday morning——There's carp and tench in the boat.——Pox on't, if that dog Lovewell had any thought, he would have brought down a turbot, or some of the land-carriage mackrell.

Mrs Heidel. Lord, brother, I am afraid his lordship and Sir John will not arrive while it is light.

Sterl. I warrant you.——But, pray, sister Heidelberg, let the turtle be drest to-morrow, and venison, and let the gardener cut some pine-apples —and get some ice.——I'll answer for wine, I warrant you——I'll give them such a glass of Champagne as they never drank in their lives—no, not at a duke's table.

Mrs Heidel. Pray now, brother, mind how you behave. I am always in a fright about you with people of qualaty. Take care that you don't fall asleep directly after supper, as you commonly do. Take a good deal of snuff; and that will keep you awake. And don't burst out with your horrible loud horse-laughs. It is monstrous wulgar.

Sterl. Never fear, sister.——Who have we here?

Mrs Heidel. It is Mons. Cantoon, the Swish gentleman, that lives with his lordship, I vow and pertest.

Enter CANTON.

Sterl. Ah, mounseer! your servant.——I am very glad to see you, mounseer.

Can. Mosh oblige to Mons. Sterling.—Ma'am, I am yours——Matemoiselle, I am yours. [*Bowing round.*

Mrs Heidel. Your humble servant, Mr Cantoon!

Can. I kiss your hands, matam!

Sterl. Well, mounseer!—and what news of your good family?——when are we to see his lordship and Sir John?

Can. Mons. Sterling! Milor Ogleby and Sir Jean Melville will be here in one quarter-hour.

Sterl. I am glad to hear it.

Mrs Heidel. O, I am perdigious glad to hear it. Being so late, I was afraid of some accident. ——Will you please to have any thing, Mr Cantoon, after your journey?

Can. No, I tank you, ma'am.

Mrs Heidel. Shall I go and shew you the apartments, sir?

Can. You do me great honeur, ma'am.

Mrs Heidel. Come then!—come, my dear! [*To Miss* STERLING. *Exeunt.*

Sterl. Pox on't, it's almost dark—It will be too late to go round the garden this evening.——However, I will carry them to take a peep at my fine canal at least, I am determined. [*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An Anti-chamber to Lord* Ogleby's *Bed-chamber. Table with Chocolate, and small Case for Medicines. Enter* Brush, *my Lord's Valet-de-chambre, and* Sterling's *Chamber-maid.*

Brush. You shall stay, my dear, I insist upon it.

Cham. Nay, pray, sir, don't be so positive; I cannot stay indeed.

Brush. You shall drink one cup to our better acquaintance.

Cham. I seldom drinks chocolate; and, if I did, one has no satisfaction with such apprehensions about one—if my lord should wake, or the Swish gentleman should see one, or Madam Heidelberg should know of it, I should be frighted to death—besides, I have had my tea already this morning——I'm sure I hear my lord. [*In a fright.*

Brush. No, no, madam, don't flutter yourself——the moment my lord wakes, he rings his bell, which I answer sooner or later, as it suits my convenience.

Cham. But should he come upon us without ringing——

Brush. I'll forgive him if he does—This key [*Takes a phial out of the case.*] locks him up till I please to let him out.

Cham. Law! Sir, that's potecary's stuff.

Brush. It is so—but without this he can no more get out of bed than he can read without spectacles—[*Sips*] What with qualms, age, rheumatisms, and a few surfeits in his youth, he must have a great deal of brushing, oiling, screwing, and winding-up, to set him a-going for the day.

Cham. [*Sips*] That's prodigious indeed—[*Sips*] My lord seems quite in a decay.

Brush. Yes, he's quite a spectacle, [*Sips.*] a mere corpse, till he is revived and refresh'd from our little magazine here——When the restorative pills, and cordial waters, warm his stomach, and get into his head, vanity frisks in his heart, and then he sets up for the lover, the rake, and the fine gentleman.

Cham. [*Sips.*] Poor gentleman! but should the Swish gentleman come upon us——[*Frightened.*

Brush. Why then the English gentleman would be very angry.——No foreigner must break in upon my privacy. [*Sips.*] But I can assure you Monsieur Canton is otherwise employed—He is obliged to skim the cream of half a score newspapers for my lord's breakfast—Ha, ha, ha! Pray, madam, drink your cup peaceably—My lord's chocolate is remarkably good; he won't touch a drop, but what comes from Italy.

Cham. [*Sipping.*] 'Tis very fine indeed! [*Sips.*] and charmingly perfumed—it smells for all the world like our young ladies' dressing-boxes.

Brush. You have an excellent taste, madam; and I must beg of you to accept of a few cakes for your own drinking, [*Takes them out of a drawer in the table.*] and, in return, I desire nothing but to taste the perfume of your lips. [*Kisses her.*]—A small return of favours, madam, will make, I hope, this country and retirement agreeable to us both. [*He bows; she curtsies.*]——Your young ladies are fine girls, faith: [*Sips.*] though, upon my soul, I am quite of my old lord's mind about them; and, were I inclined to matrimony, I should take the youngest. [*Sips.*

Cham. Miss Fanny's the most affablest, and the most best natured creter!—

Brush. And the eldest a little haughty or so——

Cham. More haughtier and prouder than Saturn himself—but this I say quite confidential to you; for one would not hurt a young lady's marriage, you know. [*Sips.*

Brush. By no means; but you cannot hurt it with us—we don't consider tempers—we want money, Mrs Nancy. Give us plenty of that, we'll abate you a great deal in other particulars, ha, ha, ha!

Cham. Bless me, here's somebody!—[*Bell rings.*]—Oh, 'tis my lord!——Well, your servant, Mr Brush——I'll clean the cups in the next room.

Brush. Do so—but never mind the bell—I sha'n't go this half hour.——Will you drink tea with me in the afternoon?

Cham. Not for the world, Mr Brush—I'll be here to set all things to rights—But I must not drink tea indeed——and so your servant.

[*Exit with tea-board. Bell rings again.*

Brush. It is impossible to stupify one's self in the country for a week, without some little flirting with the Abigails:—this is much the handsomest wench in the house, except the old citizen's youngest daughter, and I have not time enough to lay a plan for her.—[*Bell rings*]—And now I'll go to my lord, for I have nothing else to do. [*Going.*

Enter Canton, *with Newspapers in his Hand.*

Can. Monsieur Brush!——Maistre Brush! my lor stirra yet?

Brush. He has just rung his bell—I am going to him. [*Exit.*

Can. Depechez vous donc. [*Puts on his spectacles.*]—I wish de devil had all dese papiers—I forget as fast as I read—de Advertise put out of my head de Gazette, de Chronique, and so dey all go l'un aprés l'autre—I must get some nouvelle for my lor, or he'll be enragé contre moi.——Voyons! [*Reads the paper.*] Here is nothing but Anti-sejanus and advertise——

Enter Maid with Chocolate Things.

Vat you want, child?——

Maid. Only the chocolate things, sir.

Can. O, ver well—dat is good girl—and very prit too. [*Exit Maid.*

Lord Og. [*Within.*] Canton! he, he!—[*Coughs.*] Canton!——

Can. I come, my lor!——vat shall I do?—I have no news—he will make great tintamarre!—

Lord Og. [*Within.*] Canton! I say, Canton! Where are you?

Enter Lord OGLEBY, *leaning on* BRUSH.

Can. Here, my lor;—I ask pardon, my lor, I have not finish de papiers.——

Lord Og. Damn your pardon, and your papiers—I want you here, Canton.

Can. Den I run, dat is all. [*Shuffles along. Lord* OGLEBY *leans upon* CANTON *too, and comes forward.*]

Lord Og. You Swiss are the most unaccountable mixture—you have the language and the impertinence of the French, with the laziness of Dutchmen.

Can. 'Tis very true, my lor—I cann't help——

Lord Og. [*Cries out.*] O Diavolo!

Can. You are not in pain, I hope, my lor?

Lord Og. Indeed but I am, my lor.——That vulgar fellow, Sterling, with his city politeness, would force me down his slope last night to see a clay-colour'd ditch, which he calls a canal; and what with the dew, and the east wind, my hips and shoulders are absolutely screw'd to my body.

Can. A littel veritable eau d'arquibusade vil set all to right again.——

[*Lord* OG. *sits down, and* BRUSH *gives chocolate.*

Lord Og. Where are the palsy drops, Brush?

Brush. Here, my lord! [*Pouring out.*

Lord Og. Quelle nouvelle avez vous, Canton.

Can. A great deal of papier, but no news at all.

Lord Og. What! nothing at all, you stupid fellow?

Can. Yes, my lor, I have little advertise here vil give you more plaisir den all de lies about nothing at all. La voila! [*Puts on his spectacles.*

Lord Og. Come, read it, Canton, with good emphasis, and good discretion.

Can. I vil, my lor.——[CAN. *reads.*] 'Dere is no question, but that the Cosmetique Royale vil utterly take away all heats, pimps, frecks, oder eruptions of de skin, and likewise de wrinque of old age, &c. &c.'—A great deal more, my lor.—'Be sure to ask for de Cosmetique Royale, signed by the Doctor own hand—Dere is more raison for dis caution dan good men vil tink.'—Eh bien, my lor!

Lord Og. Eh bien, Canton!——Will you purchase any?

Can. For you, my lor?

Lord Og. For me, you old puppy! for what?

Can. My lor!

Lord Og. Do I want cosmeticks?

Can. My lor!

Lord Og. Look in my face—come, be sincere.——Does it want the assistance of art?

Can. [*With his spectacles.*] En verité non——'Tis very smoose and brillian——but tote dat you might take a little by way of prevention.

Lord Og. You thought like an old fool, monsieur, as you generally do.——The surfeit water, Brush! [BRUSH *pours out.*]——What do you think, Brush, of this family we are going to be connected with?——Eh!

Brush. Very well to marry in, my lord; but it would never do to live with.

Lord Og. You are right, Brush——There is no washing the blackmoor white——Mr Sterling will never get rid of Blackfriars——always taste of the Boracho——and the poor woman his sister is so busy, and so notable, to make one welcome, that I have not yet got over her first reception; it almost amounted to suffocation!——I think the daughters are tolerable——Where's my cephalic snuff? [BRUSH *gives him a box.*]

Can. Dey tink so of you, my lor, for dey look at no ting else, ma foi.

Lord Og. Did they! Why, I think they did a little——Where's my glass? [BRUSH *puts one on the table.*] The youngest is delectable.

[*Takes snuff.*

Can. O oui, my lor, very delect, inteed: she made doux yeux at you, my lor.

Lord Og. She was particular.——The eldest, my nephew's lady, will be a most valuable wife; she has all the vulgar spirits of her father and aunt, happily blended with the termagant qualities of her deceased mother.——Some peppermint water, Brush.——How happy is it, Canton, for young ladies in general, that people of quality overlook every thing in a marriage contract but their fortune.

Can. C'est bien heureux, et commode aussi.

Lord Og. Brush, give me that pamphlet by my bed side.——[BRUSH *goes for it.*] Canton, do you wait in the anti-chamber, and let nobody interrupt me till I call you.

Can. Mush good may do your lordship.

Lord Og. [*To* BRUSH, *who brings the pamphlet.*] And now, Brush, leave me a little to my studies. [*Exit* BRUSH.]——What can I possibly do among these women here, with this confounded rheumatism? It is a most grievous enemy to gallantry and address. [*Gets off his chair.*] He! courage, my lor! by Heavens I'm another creature. [*Hums and dances a little.*] It will do, faith.——Bravo, my lor! these girls have absolutely inspired me——If they are for a game of romps——Me voila pret! [*Sings and dances.*]——Oh! that's an ugly twinge—But it's gone.——I have rather too much of the lily this morning in my complexion; a faint tincture of the rose will give a delicate spirit to my eyes for the day. [*Unlocks a drawer at the bottom of the glass, and takes out rouge; while he's painting himself, a knocking at the door.*] Who's there? I won't be disturb'd.

Can. [*Without.*] My lor! my lor! here is Monsieur Sterling to pay his devoir to you this morn in your chambre.

Lord Og. [*Softly.*] What a fellow!——[*Aloud.*] I am extremely honour'd by Mr Sterling.—Why don't you see him in, monsieur!——I wish he was at the bottom of his stinking canal. [*Door opens.*]

Oh, my dear Mr Stirling, you do me a great deal of honour.

Enter STERLING *and* LOVEWELL.

Sterl. I hope, my lord, that your lordship slept well in the night——I believe there are no better beds in Europe than I have—I spare no pains to get them, nor money to buy them.——His majesty, God bless him, don't sleep upon a better out of his palace; and if I had said in too, I hope no treason, my lord.

Lord Og. Your beds are like every thing else about you—incomparable!—They not only make one rest well, but give one spirits, Mr Sterling.

Sterl. What say you then, my lord, to another walk in the garden? You must see my water by day-light, and my walks, and my slopes, and my clumps, and my bridge, and my flow'ring trees, and my bed of Dutch tulips.—Matters look'd but dim last night, my lord. I feel the dew in my great toe—but I would put on a cut shoe, that I might be able to walk you about—I may be laid up to-morrow.

Lord Og. I pray Heaven you may! [*Aside.*

Sterl. What say you, my lord?

Lord Og. I was saying, sir, that I was in hopes of seeing the young ladies at breakfast: Mr Sterling, they are, in my mind, the finest tulips in this part of the world, he, he, he!

Can. Bravissimo, my lor! ha, ha, he!

Sterl. They shall meet your lordship in the garden—we won't lose our walk for them; I'll take you a little round before breakfast, and a larger before dinner, and in the evening you shall go the grand tour, as I call it, ha, ha, ha!

Lord Og. Not a foot, I hope, Mr Sterling; consider your gout, my good friend—you'll certainly be laid by the heels for your politeness, he, he, he!

Can. Ha, ha, ha! 'tis admirable, en verité! [*Laughing very heartily.*

Sterl. If my young man [*To* LOV.] here would but laugh at my jokes, which he ought to do, as mounseer does at yours, my lord, we should be all life and mirth.

Lord Og. What say you, Canton? will you take my kinsman into your tuition? You have certainly the most companionable laugh I ever met with, and never out of tune.

Can. But when your lordship is out of spirits.

Lord Og. Well said, Canton! But here comes my nephew, to play his part.

Enter Sir JOHN MELVIL.

Well, Sir John, what news from the island of Love! Have you been sighing and serenading this morning?

Sir John. I am glad to see your lordship in such spirits this morning.

Lord Og. I'm sorry to see you so dull, sir.—What poor things, Mr Sterling, these very young fellows are! they make love with faces, as if they were burying the dead—though, indeed, a marriage sometimes may be properly called a burying of the living—eh, Mr Sterling?

Sterl. Not if they have enough to live upon, my lord—Ha, ha, ha!

Can. Dat is all Monsieur Sterling tink of.——

Sir John. [*Apart.*] Pr'ythee, Lovewell, come with me into the garden; I have something of consequence for you, and I must communicate it directly.

Love. [*Apart.*] We'll go together.——If your lordship and Mr Sterling please, we'll prepare the ladies to attend you in the garden.

[*Exeunt Sir* JOHN *and* LOVEWELL.

Sterl. My girls are always ready; I make them rise soon and to bed early; their husbands shall have them with good constitutions, and good fortunes, if they have nothing else, my lord.

Lord Og. Fine things, Mr Sterling!

Sterl. Fine things, indeed, my lord!—Ah, my lord, had not you run off your speed in your youth, you had not been so crippled in your age, my lord!

Lord Og. Very pleasant, he, he, he!—— [*Half laughing.*

Sterl. Here's mounseer now, I suppose, is pretty near your lordship's standing; but having little to eat, and little to spend in his own country, he'll wear three of your lordship out—Eating and drinking kills us all.

Lord Og. Very pleasant, I protest—What a vulgar dog! [*Aside.*

Can. My lor so old as me!—He is chicken to me—and look like a boy to pauvre me.

Sterl. Ha, ha, ha! Well said, mounseer—keep to that, and you'll live in any country of the world ——Ha, ha, ha!—But, my lord, I will wait upon you in the garden: we have but a little time to breakfast—I'll go for my hat and cane, fetch a little walk with you, my lord, and then for the hot rolls and butter! [*Exit.*

Lord Og. I shall attend you with pleasure——Hot rolls and butter in July! I sweat with the thoughts of it—What a strange beast it is!

Can. C'est un barbare.

Lord Og. He is a vulgar dog, and if there was not so much money in the family, which I cann't do without, I would leave him and his hot rolls and butter directly——Come along, monsieur!

[*Exeunt Lord* OGLEBY *and* CANTON.

SCENE II.—*Changes to the Garden.*

Enter Sir JOHN MELVIL *and* LOVEWELL.

Lov. In my room this morning? Impossible.

Sir John. Before five this morning, I promise you.

Lov. On what occasion?

Sir John. I was so anxious to disclose my mind to you, that I could not sleep in my bed—but I found that you could not sleep neither—The bird was flown, and the nest long since cold.—Where was you, Lovewell?

Lov. Pooh! pr'ythee! ridiculous!

Sir John. Come now, which was it? Miss Sterling's maid? a pretty little rogue! or Miss Fanny's Abigail? a sweet soul too—or—

Lov. Nay, nay, leave trifling, and tell me your business.

Sir John. Well, but where was you, Lovewell?

Lov. Walking—Writing—what signifies where I was?

Sir John. Walking, yes, I dare say.—It rained as hard as it could pour. Sweet refreshing showers to walk in—No, no, Lovewell.—Now would I give twenty pounds to know which of the maids——

Lov. But your business! your business, Sir John!

Sir John. Let me a little into the secrets of the family.

Lov. Psha!

Sir John. Poor Lovewell, he cann't bear it, I see. She charged you not to kiss and tell. Eh, Lovewell! However, though you will not honour me with your confidence, I'll venture to trust you with mine.——What do you think of Miss Sterling?

Lov. What do I think of Miss Sterling?

Sir John. Ay; what d'ye think of her?

Lov. An odd question!—but I think her a smart, lively girl, full of mirth and sprightliness.

Sir John. All mischief and malice, I doubt.

Lov. How?

Sir John. But her person—what d'ye think of that?

Lov. Pretty and agreeable.

Sir John. A little grisette thing.

Lov. What is the meaning of all this?

Sir John. I'll tell you.—You must know, Lovewell, that, notwithstanding all appearances—[*Seeing Lord* OGLEBY, *&c.*] We are interrupted—When they are gone, I'll explain.

Enter Lord OGLEBY, STERLING, *Mrs* HEIDELBERG, *Miss* STERLING, *and* FANNY.

Lord Og. Great improvements indeed, Mr Sterling! wonderful improvements! The four Seasons in lead, the flying Mercury, and the bason with Neptune in the middle, are all in the very extreme of fine taste. You have as many rich figures as the man at Hyde-park Corner.

Sterl. The chief pleasure of a country-house is to make improvements, you know, my lord. I spare no expence, not I.——This is quite another guess sort of a place than it was when I first took it, my lord. We were surrounded with trees. I cut down above fifty to make the lawn before the house, and let in the wind and the sun—smack-smooth—as you see.——Then I made a green-house out of the old laundry, and turned the brew-house into a pinery.—The high octagon summer-house, you see yonder, is raised on the mast of a ship, given me by an East-India captain, who has turned many a thousand of my money. It commands the whole road. All the coaches and chariots, and chaises, pass and repass under your eye. I'll mount you up there in the afternoon, my lord. 'Tis the pleasantest place in the world to take a pipe and a bottle, and so you shall say, my lord.

Lord Og. Ay, or a bowl of punch, or a cann of flip, Mr Sterling! for it looks like a cabin in the air.——If flying chairs were in use, the captain might make a voyage to the Indies in it still, if he had but a fair wind.

Can. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Mrs Heidel. My brother's a little comical in his ideas, my lord!—But you'll excuse him.—I have a little Gothic dairy, fitted up entirely in my own taste.—In the evening, I shall hope for the honour of your lordship's company to take a dish of tea there, or a sullabub warm from the cow.

Lord Og. I have every moment a fresh opportunity of admiring the elegance of Mrs Heidelberg—the very flower of delicacy, and cream of politeness.

Mrs Heidel. O, my lord! [*Leering at Lord* OG.

Lord Og. O, madam! [*Leering at Mrs* HEIDEL.

Sterl. How d'ye like these close walks, my lord?

Lord Og. A most excellent serpentine! It forms a perfect maze, and winds like a true lover's knot.

Sterl. Ay, here's none of your straight lines here——but all taste—zig-zag—crinkum-crankum—in and out—right and left—to and again—twisting and turning like a worm, my lord!

Lord Og. Admirably laid out indeed, Mr Sterling! one can hardly see an inch beyond one's nose any where in these walks.—You are a most excellent economist of your land, and make a little go a great way.—It lies together in as small parcels as if it was placed in pots out at your window in Gracechurch-street.

Can. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Lord Og. What d'ye laugh at, Canton?

Can. Ah! que cette similitude est drole! So clever what you say, mi lor!——

Lord Og. [*To* FANNY.] You seem mightily engaged, madam. What are those pretty hands so busily employed about?

Fan. Only making up a nosegay, my lord!——Will your lordship do me the honour of accepting it? [*Presenting it.*

Lord Og. I'll wear it next my heart, madam!—I see the young creature dotes on me! [*Apart.*

Miss Sterl. Lord, sister! you've loaded his lordship with a bunch of flowers as big as the cook or the nurse carry to town, on a Monday morning, for a beau-pot.—Will your lordship give me leave to present you with this rose and a sprig of sweet-briar?

Lord Og. The truest emblems of yourself, madam! all sweetness and poignancy.——A little jealous, poor soul! [*Apart.*

Sterl. Now, my lord, if you please, I'll carry you to see my ruins.

Mrs Heidel. You'll absolutely fatigue his lordship with over-walking, brother!

Lord Og. Not at all, madam! We're in the garden of Eden, you know; in the region of perpetual spring, youth, and beauty.

[*Leering at the women.*

Mrs Heidel. Quite the man of qualaty, I pertest. [*Apart.*

Can. Take a my arm, my lor!

[*Lord* OGLEBY *leans on him.*

Sterl. I'll only shew his lordship my ruins, and

the cascade, and the Chinese bridge, and then we'll go into breakfast.

Lord Og. Ruins, did you say, Mr Sterling?

Sterl. Ay, ruins, my lord! and they are reckoned very fine ones too. You would think them ready to tumble on your head. It has just cost me a hundred and fifty pounds to put my ruins in thorough repair. This way, if your lordship pleases.

Lord Og. [*Going, stops.*] What steeple's that we see yonder?—the parish church, I suppose.

Sterl. Ha, ha, ha! that's admirable. It is no church at all, my lord! it is a spire that I have built against a tree, a field or two off, to terminate the prospect. One must always have a church, or an obelisk, or something, to terminate the prospect, you know. That's a rule in taste, my lord!

Lord Og. Very ingenious, indeed! For my part, I desire no finer prospect than this I see before me. [*Leering at the women.*]—Simple, yet varied; bounded, yet extensive.—Get away, Canton! [*Pushing away* Canton.] I want no assistance—I'll walk with the ladies.

Sterl. This way, my lord!

Lord Og. Lead on, sir!—We young folks here will follow you.—Madam!—Miss Sterling!——Miss Fanny! I attend you.

[*Exit after* Sterling, *gallanting the ladies.*

Can. [*Following.*] He is cock o' de game, ma foy! [*Exit.*

Sir John. At length, thank Heaven, I have an opportunity to unbosom.—I know you are faithful, Lovewell, and flatter myself you would rejoice to serve me.

Lov. Be assured you may depend upon me.

Sir John. You must know, then, notwithstanding all appearances, that this treaty of marriage between Miss Sterling and me will come to nothing.

Lov. How!

Sir John. It will be no match, Lovewell.

Lov. No match?

Sir John. No.

Lov. You amaze me. What should prevent it?

Sir John. I.

Lov. You! wherefore?

Sir John. I don't like her.

Lov. Very plain, indeed! I never supposed that you was extremely devoted to her from inclination, but thought you always considered it as a matter of convenience, rather than affection.

Sir John. Very true. I came into the family without any impressions on my mind—with an unimpassioned indifference, ready to receive one woman as soon as another. I looked upon love, serious, sober love, as a chimera, and marriage as a thing of course, as you know most people do. But I, who was lately so great an infidel in love, am now one of its sincerest votaries.—In short, my defection from Miss Sterling proceeds from the violence of my attachment to another.

Lov. Another! So, so! here will be fine work. And pray, who is she?

Sir John. Who is she? who can she be? but Fanny, the tender, amiable, engaging Fanny.

Love. Fanny! What Fanny?

Sir John. Fanny Sterling. Her sister—Is not she an angel, Lovewell?

Lov. Her sister? Confusion!—You must not think of it, Sir John.

Sir John. Not think of it? I can think of nothing else. Nay tell me, Lovewell! was it possible for me to be indulged in a perpetual intercourse with two such objects as Fanny and her sister, and not find my heart led by insensible attraction towards her?—You seem confounded—Why don't you answer me?

Lov. Indeed, Sir John, this event gives me infinite concern.

Sir John. Why so?——Is she not an angel, Lovewell?

Lov. I foresee that it must produce the worst consequences. Consider the confusion it must unavoidably create. Let me persuade you to drop these thoughts in time.

Sir John. Never—never, Lovewell.

Lov. You have gone too far to recede. A negociation, so nearly concluded, cannot be broken off with any grace. The lawyers, you know, are hourly expected; the preliminaries almost finally settled between Lord Ogleby and Mr Sterling; and Miss Sterling herself ready to receive you as a husband.

Sir John. Why the banns have been published, and nobody has forbidden them, 'tis true. But you know either of the parties may change their minds even after they enter the church.

Lov. You think too lightly of this matter. To carry your addresses so far——and then to desert her—and for her sister too!—It will be such an affront to the family, that they can never put up with it.

Sir John. I don't think so: for as to my transferring my passion from her to her sister, so much the better! for then, you know, I don't carry my affection out of the family.

Lov. Nay, but pr'ythee be serious, and think better of it.

Sir John. I have thought better of it already, you see. Tell me honestly, Lovewell, can you blame me? Is there any comparison between them?

Lov. As to that now—why that—is just—just as it may strike different people. There are many admirers of Miss Sterling's vivacity.

Sir John. Vivacity! a medley of Cheapside pertness and Whitechapel pride.—No—no, if I do go so far into the city for a wedding dinner, it shall be upon turtle at least.

Lov. But I see no probability of success; for, granting that Mr Sterling would have consented to it at first, he cannot listen to it now. Why did not you break this affair to the family before?

Sir John. Under such embarrassed circumstances as I have been, can you wonder at my irresolution or perplexity? Nothing but despair, the fear of losing my dear Fanny, could bring me to a declaration even now; and yet, I think I know Mr Sterling so well, that, strange as my proposal may

appear, if I can make it advantageous to him as a money transaction, as I am sure I can, he will certainly come into it.

Lov. But even suppose he should, which I very much doubt, I don't think Fanny herself would listen to your addresses.

Sir John. You are deceived a little in that particular.

Lov. You'll find I am in the right.

Sir John. I have some little reason to think otherwise.

Lov. You have not declared your passion to her already?

Sir John. Yes, I have.

Lov. Indeed!—And—and—and how did she receive it?

Sir John. I think it is not very easy for me to make my addresses to any woman, without receiving some little encouragement.

Lov. Encouragement! did she give you any encouragement?

Sir John. I don't know what you call encouragement—but she blushed—and cried—and desired me not to think of it any more:—upon which I prest her hand—kissed it—swore she was an angel—and I could see it tickled her to the soul.

Lov. And did she express no surprise at your declaration?

Sir John. Why, faith, to say the truth, she was a little surprised—and she got away from me too, before I could thoroughly explain myself. If I should not meet with an opportunity of speaking to her, I must get you to deliver a letter for me.

Lov. I!—a letter!—I had rather have nothing——

Sir John. Nay, you promised me your assistance—and I am sure you cannot scruple to make yourself useful on such an occasion.—You may, without suspicion, acquaint her verbally of my determined affection for her, and that I am resolved to ask her father's consent.

Lov. As to that, I—your commands, you know——that is, if she——Indeed, Sir John, I think you are in the wrong.

Sir John. Well—well—that's my concern——Ha! there she goes, by heaven! along that walk yonder, d'ye see! I'll go to her immediately.

Lov. You are too precipitate. Consider what you are doing.

Sir John. I would not lose this opportunity for the universe.

Lov. Nay, pray don't go! Your violence and eagerness may overcome her spirits——The shock will be too much for her.

[*Detaining him.*

Sir John. Nothing shall prevent me.——Ha! now she turns into another walk——Let me go! [*Breaks from him.*] I shall lose her. [*Going, turns back.*] Be sure now to keep out of the way! If you interrupt us, I shall never forgive you.

[*Exit hastily.*

Lov. 'Sdeath! I cann't bear this. In love with my wife! acquaint me with his passion for her! make his addresses before my face!—I shall break out before my time.——This was the meaning of Fanny's uneasiness. She could not encourage him——I am sure she could not.——Ha! they are turning into the walk, and coming this way. Shall I leave the place?——Leave him to solicit my wife! I cann't submit to it.—They come nearer and nearer——If I stay, it will look suspicious—It may betray us, and incense him——They are here——I must go——I am the most unfortunate fellow in the world. [*Exit.*

Enter FANNY *and Sir* JOHN.

Fan. Leave me, Sir John, I beseech you leave me! nay, why will you persist to follow me with idle solicitations, which are an affront to my character, and an injury to your own honour?

Sir John. I know your delicacy, and tremble to offend it: but let the urgency of the occasion be my excuse! Consider, madam, that the future happiness of my life depends on my present application to you! consider that this day must determine my fate; and these are perhaps the only moments left me to incline you to warrant my passion, and to entreat you not to oppose the proposals I mean to open to your father.

Fan. For shame, for shame, Sir John! Think of your previous engagements! Think of your own situation, and think of mine! What have you discovered in my conduct that might encourage you to so bold a declaration? I am shocked that you should venture to say so much, and blush that I should even dare to give it a hearing.—Let me begone!

Sir John. Nay, stay, madam, but one moment——Your sensibility is too great.——Engagements! what engagements have been pretended on either side more than those of family convenience? I went on in the trammels of matrimonial negociation with a blind submission to your father and Lord Ogleby; but my heart soon claimed a right to be consulted. It has devoted itself to you, and obliges me to plead earnestly for the same tender interest in yours.

Fan. Have a care, Sir John! do not mistake a depraved will for a virtuous inclination. By these common pretences of the heart, half our sex are made fools, and a greater part of yours despise them for it.

Sir John. Affection, you will allow, is involuntary. We cannot always direct it to the object on which it should fix—But when it is once inviolably attached—inviolably as mine is to you, it often creates reciprocal affection.—When I last urged you on this subject, you heard me with more temper, and I hoped with some compassion.

Fan. You deceived yourself. If I forbore to exert a proper spirit; nay, if I did not even express the quickest resentment of your behaviour, it was only in consideration of that respect I wish to pay you, in honour to my sister: and be assured, sir, woman as I am, that my vanity could reap no pleasure from a triumph that must result from the blackest treachery to her. [*Going.*

Sir John. One word, and I have done. [*Stop-*

ping her.] Your impatience and anxiety, and the urgency of the occasion, oblige me to be brief and explicit with you.——I appeal therefore from your delicacy to your justice.——Your sister, I verily believe, neither entertains any real affection for me, or tenderness for you. Your father, I am inclined to think, is not much concerned by means of which of his daughters the families are united. ——Now, as they cannot, shall not be connected, otherwise than by my union with you, why will you, from a false delicacy, oppose a measure so conducive to my happiness, and, I hope, your own? I love you, most passionately and sincerely love you—and hope to propose terms agreeable to Mr Sterling:——If then you don't absolutely loath, abhor, and scorn me—if there is no other happier man—

Fan. Hear me, sir, hear my final determination. ——Were my father and sister as insensible as you are pleased to represent them;——were my heart for ever to remain disengaged to any other, I could not listen to your proposals.——What! you on the very eve of a marriage with my sister; I living under the same roof with her, bound not only by the laws of friendship and hospitality, but even the ties of blood, to contribute to her happiness, and not to conspire against her peace; the peace of a whole family; and that of my own too!—Away, away, Sir John!——At such a time, and in such circumstances, your addresses only inspire me with horror.——Nay, you must detain me no longer——I will go.

Sir John. Do not leave me in absolute despair! Give me a glimpse of hope! [*Falling on his knees.*

Fan. I cannot.——Pray, Sir John! [*Struggling to go.*

Sir John. Shall this hand be given to another? [*Kissing her hand.*] No, I cannot endure it.—— My whole soul is yours, and the whole happiness of my life is in your power.

Enter Miss Sterling.

Fan. Ha! my sister is here. Rise, for shame, Sir John.

Sir John. Miss Sterling! [*Rising.*

Mis Ster. I beg pardon, sir;—You'll excuse me, madam!—I have broke in upon you a little unopportunely, I believe—but I did not mean to interrupt you——I only came, sir, to let you know that breakfast waits, if you have finished your morning's devotions.

Sir John. I am very sensible, Miss Sterling, that this may appear particular, but———

Miss Ster. O dear, Sir John, don't put yourself to the trouble of an apology——The thing explains itself.

Sir John. It will soon, madam.——In the mean time, I can only assure you of my profound respect and esteem for you, and make no doubt of convincing Mr Sterling of the honour and integrity of my intentions.——And—and—your humble servant, madam! [*Exit in confusion.*

Miss Sterl. Respect!—Insolence!—Esteem!—Very fine, truly!——And you, madam! my sweet, delicate, innocent, sentimental sister! will you convince my papa too of the integrity of your intentions?

Fan. Do not upbraid me, my dear sister! Indeed I don't deserve it. Believe me, you cann't be more offended at his behaviour than I am, and I am sure it cannot make you half so miserable.

Miss Sterl. Make me miserable! You are mightily deceived, madam; it gives me no sort of uneasiness, I assure you.—A base fellow!—As for you, miss! the pretended softness of your disposition, your artful good-nature, never imposed upon me. I always knew you to be sly, and envious, and deceitful.

Fan. Indeed you wrong me.

Miss Sterl. Oh, you are all goodness, to be sure! —Did I not find him on his knees before you? Did not I see him kiss your sweet hand? Did not I hear his protestations? Was not I a witness of your dissembled modesty?——No, no, my dear! don't imagine that you can make a fool of your elder sister so easily.

Fan. Sir John, I own, is to blame; but I am above the thoughts of doing you the least injury.

Miss Sterl. We shall try that, madam.——I hope, miss, you'll be able to give a better account to my papa and my aunt, for they shall both know of this matter, I promise you. [*Exit.*

Fan. How unhappy I am! my distresses multiply upon me.——Mr Lovewell must now become acquainted with Sir John's behaviour to me, and in a manner that may add to his uneasiness. My father, instead of being disposed by fortunate circumstances to forgive my transgression, will be previously incensed against me. My sister and my aunt will become irreconcilably my enemies, and rejoice in my disgrace.——Yet, in all events, I am determined on a discovery. I dread it, and am resolved to hasten it. It is surrounded with more horrors every instant, as it appears every instant more necessary. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Hall.*

Enter a Servant, leading in Serjeant FLOWER, *and Counsellors* TRAVERSE *and* TRUEMAN, *all booted.*

Serv. This way, if you please, gentlemen! my master is at breakfast with the family at present, but I'll let him know, and he will wait on you immediately.

Flow. Mighty well, young man, mighty well.

Serv. Please to favour me with your names, gentlemen.

Flow. Let Mr Sterling know, that Mr Serjeant Flower, and two other gentlemen of the bar, are come to wait on him according to his appointment.

Serv. I will, sir. [*Going.*

Flow. And hark'ye, young man, [*Servant returns.*] desire my servant—Mr Serjeant Flower's servant, to bring in my green and gold saddle-cloth and pistols, and lay them down here in the hall with my portmanteau.

Serv. I will, sir. [*Exit.*

Flow. Well, gentlemen! the settling these marriage articles falls conveniently enough, almost just on the eve of the circuits.——Let me see—the Home, the Midland, and Western! ay, we can all cross the country well enough to our several destinations.——Traverse, when do you begin at Hertford?

Trav. The day after to-morrow.

Flow. That is commission-day with us at Warwick too. But my clerk has retainers for every cause in the paper, so it will be time enough if I am there the next morning. Besides, I have about half a dozen cases that have lain by me ever since the spring assizes, and I must tack opinions to them before I see my country clients again; so I will take the evening before me, and then *currente calamo*, as I say—eh, Traverse?

Trav. True, Mr Serjeant; and the easiest thing in the world too; for those country attornies are such ignorant dogs, that in case of the devise of an estate to A and his heirs for ever, they'll make a query whether he takes in fee or in tail.

Flow. Do you expect to have much to do on the Home Circuit these assizes?

Trav. Not much *nisi prius* business, but a good deal on the crown side, I believe. The gaols are brim full, and some of the felons in good circumstances, and likely to be tolerable clients. Let me see! I am engaged for three highway robberies, two murders, one forgery, and half a dozen larcenies, at Kingston.

Flow. A pretty decent gaol-delivery!—Do you expect to bring off Darkin, for the robbery on Putney-Common? Can you make out your alibi?

Trav. Oh! no! the crown witnesses are sure to prove our identity. We shall certainly be hanged: but that don't signify.——But, Mr Serjeant, have you much to do?——Any remarkable cause on the Midland this circuit?

Flow. Nothing very remarkable——except two rapes, and Rider and Western at Nottingham, for crim. con.——but, on the whole, I believe a good deal of business.——Our associate tells me, there are above thirty *venires* for Warwick.

Trav. Pray, Mr Serjeant, are you concerned in Jones and Thomas at Lincoln?

Flow. I am——for the plaintiff.

Trav. And what do you think on't?

Flow. A nonsuit.

Trav. I thought so.

Flow. Oh, no manner of doubt on't——*luce clarius*—we have no right in us—we have but one chance.

Trav. What's that?

Flow. Why, my Lord Chief does not go to the circuit this time, and my brother Puzzle being in the commission, the cause will come on before him.

True. Ay, that may do indeed, if you can but throw dust in the eyes of the defendant's counsel.

Flow. True.——Mr Trueman, I think you are concerned for Lord Ogleby in this affair?

[*To* TRUE.

True. I am, sir.——I have the honour to be related to his lordship, and hold some courts for him in Somersetshire——go the Western circuit——and attend the sessions at Exeter, merely because his lordship's interests and property lie in that part of the kingdom.

Flow. Ha!——and pray, Mr Trueman, how long have you been called to the bar?

True. About nine years and three quarters.

Flow. Ha!——I don't know that I ever had the pleasure of seeing you before.——I wish you success, young gentleman!

Enter STERLING.

Sterl. Oh, Mr Serjeant Flower, I am glad to see you——Your servant, Mr Serjeant! gentlemen, your servant. Well, are all matters concluded? Has that snail-paced conveyancer, old Ferret, of Gray's-Inn, settled the articles at last? Do you approve of what he has done? Will his tackle hold, tight and strong?——Eh, Master Serjeant?

Flow. My friend Ferret's slow and sure, sir——But then, *serius aut citius*, as we say, sooner or later, Mr Sterling, he is sure to put his business out of hand as he should do.——My clerk has brought the writing, and all other instruments along with him, and the settlement is, I believe, as good a settlement as any settlement on the face of the earth!

Sterl. But the damn'd mortgage of 60,000l.——There don't appear to be any other incumbrances, I hope?

Trav. I can answer for that, sir——and that

will be cleared off immediately on the payment of the first part of Miss Sterling's proportion.——You agree, on your part, to come down with 80,000l. ?

Sterl. Down on the nail.——Ay, ay, my money is ready to-morrow if he pleases——he shall have it in India-bonds, or notes, or how he chooses.——Your lords and your dukes, and your people at the court-end of the town stick at payments sometimes——debts unpaid, no credit lost with them——but no fear of us substantial fellows——Eh, Mr Serjeant ?

Flow. Sir John having last term, according to agreement, levied a fine, and suffered a recovery, has hitherto cut off the entail of the Ogleby estate for the better effecting the purposes of the present intended marriage; on which above-mentioned Ogleby estate, a jointure of 2000l. per annum is secured to your eldest daughter, now Elizabeth Sterling, spinster, and the whole estate, after the death of the aforesaid earl, descends to the heirs male of Sir John Melvil, on the body of the aforesaid Elizabeth Sterling lawfully to be begotten.

Trav. Very true——and Sir John is to be put in immediate possession of as much of his lordship's Somersetshire estate, as lies in the manors of Hogmore and Cranford, amounting to between two and three thousand per annum, and at the death of Mr Sterling, a further sum of seventy thousand——

Enter Sir John Melvil.

Sterl. Ah, Sir John ! Here we are——hard at it——paving the road to matrimony——First the lawyers, then comes the doctor——Let us but dispatch the long-robe, we shall soon get pudding sleeves to work, I warrant you.

Sir John. I am sorry to interrupt you, sir——But I hope that both you and these gentlemen will excuse me——Having something very particular for your private ear, I took the liberty of following you, and beg you will oblige me with an audience immediately.

Sterl. Ay, with all my heart !——Gentlemen, Mr Serjeant, you'll excuse it——Business must be done, you know. The writings will keep cold till to-morrow morning.

Flow. I must be at Warwick, Mr Sterling, the day after.

Sterl. Nay, nay, I sha'n't part with you to-night, gentlemen, I promise you.——My house is very full, but I have beds for you all, beds for your servants, and stabling for all your horses.——Will you take a turn in the garden, and view some of my improvements before dinner ? Or will you amuse yourselves on the green, with a game of bowls and a cool tankard ?——My servants shall attend you——Do you choose any other refreshment ?——Call for what you please ; do as you please ;——make yourselves quite at home, I beg of you.——Here, Thomas ! Harry ! William ! wait on these gentlemen !——[*Follows the lawyers out, bawling and talking, and then returns to Sir* John.] And now, sir, I am entirely at your service. What are your commands with me, Sir John ?

Sir John. After having carried the negociation between our families to so great a length ; after having assented so readily to all your proposals, as well as received so many instances of your cheerful compliance with the demands made on our part, I am extremely concerned, Mr Sterling, to be the involuntary cause of any uneasiness.

Sterl. Uneasiness! what uneasiness?——Where business is transacted as it ought to be, and the parties understand one another, there can be no uneasiness. You agree, on such and such conditions, to receive my daughter for a wife ; on the same conditions I agree to receive you as a son-in-law ; and as to all the rest, it follows of course, you know, as regularly as the payment of a bill after acceptance.

Sir John. Pardon me, sir ; more uneasiness has arisen than you are aware of. I am myself, at this instant, in a state of inexpressible embarrassment ; Miss Sterling, I know, is extremely disconcerted too ; and, unless you will oblige me with the assistance of your friendship, I foresee the speedy progress of discontent and animosity through the whole family.

Sterl. What the deuce is all this ? I don't understand a single syllable.

Sir John. In one word then——It will be absolutely impossible for me to fulfil my engagements in regard to Miss Sterling.

Sterl. How, Sir John! Do you mean to put an affront upon my family ? What ? refuse to——

Sir John. Be assured, sir, that I neither mean to affront nor forsake your family. My only fear is, that you should desert me ; for the whole happiness of my life depends on my being connected with your family, by the nearest and tenderest ties in the world.

Sterl. Why, did not you tell me, but a moment ago, that it was absolutely impossible for you to marry my daughter ?

Sir John. True.——But you have another daughter, sir——

Sterl. Well !

Sir John. Who has obtained the most absolute dominion over my heart. I have already declared my passion to her ; nay, Miss Sterling herself is also apprised of it, and if you will but give a sanction to my present addresses, the uncommon merit of Miss Sterling will, no doubt, recommend her to a person of equal, if not superior rank to myself, and our families may still be allied by my union with Miss Fanny.

Sterl. Mighty fine, truly ! Why, what the plague do you make of us, Sir John ? Do you come to market for my daughters, like servants at a statute-fair ? Do you think that I will suffer you, or any man in the world, to come into my house, like the Grand Signior, and throw the handkerchief first to one, and then to t'other, just as he pleases ? Do you think I drive a kind of African slave-trade with them ? and———

Sir John. A moment's patience, sir ! Nothing but the excess of my passion for Miss Fanny should have induced me to take any step that had the least appearance of disrespect to any part of your

family; and even now I am desirous to atone for my transgression, by making the most adequate compensation that lies in my power.

Sterl. Compensation! what compensation can you possibly make in such a case as this, Sir John?

Sir John. Come, come, Mr Sterling; I know you to be a man of sense, a man of business, a man of the world. I'll deal frankly with you; and you shall see that I don't desire a change of measures for my own gratification, without endeavouring to make it advantageous to you.

Sterl. What advantage can your inconstancy be to me, Sir John?

Sir John. I'll tell you, sir.——You know that by the articles at present subsisting between us, on the day of my marriage with Miss Sterling, you agree to pay down the gross sum of eighty thousand pounds.

Sterl. Well!

Sir John. Now, if you will but consent to my waving that marriage———

Sterl. I agree to your waving that marriage! Impossible, Sir John!

Sir John. I hope not, sir; as, on my part, I will agree to wave my right to thirty-thousand pounds of the fortune I was to receive with her.

Sterl. Thirty thousand, d'ye say?

Sir John. Yes, sir; and accept of Miss Fanny, with fifty thousand, instead of fourscore.

Sterl. Fifty thousand!——— [*Pausing.*

Sir John. Instead of fourscore.

Sterl. Why—why—there may be something in that.——Let me see—Fanny with fifty thousand, instead of Betsy with fourscore.——But how can this be, Sir John? For you know I am to pay this money into the hands of my Lord Ogleby; who, I believe, between you and me, Sir John, is not overstocked with ready money at present; and threescore thousand of it, you know, is to go to pay off the present incumbrances on the estate, Sir John.

Sir John. That objection is easily obviated.—— Ten of the twenty thousand, which would remain as a surplus of the fourscore, after paying off the mortgage, was intended by his lordship for my use, that we might set off with some little eclat on our marriage; and the other ten for his own.—Ten thousand pounds, therefore, I shall be able to pay you immediately; and for the remaining twenty thousand, you shall have a mortgage on that part of the estate which is to be made over to me, with whatever security you shall require for the regular payment of the interest, till the principal is duly discharged.

Sterl. Why—to do you justice, Sir John, there is something fair and open in your proposal: and, since I find you do not mean to put an affront upon the family———

Sir John. Nothing was ever farther from my thoughts, Mr Sterling.——And after all, the whole affair is nothing extraordinary—such things happen every day; and as the world has only heard generally of a treaty between the families, when this marriage takes place, nobody will be the wiser, if we have but discretion enough to keep our own counsel.

Sterl. True, true; and since you only transfer from one girl to the other, it is no more than transferring so much stock, you know.

Sir John. The very thing!

Sterl. Odso! I had quite forgot.——We are reckoning without our host here—there is another difficulty———

Sir John. You alarm me. What can that be?

Sterl. I cann't stir a step in this business without consulting my sister Heidelberg.——The family has very great expectations from her, and we must not give her any offence.

Sir John. But if you come into this measure, surely she will be so kind as to consent———

Sterl. I don't know that—Betsy is her darling, and I cann't tell how far she may resent any slight that seems to be offered to her favourite niece. However, I'll do the best I can for you. You shall go and break the matter to her first, and, by that time I may suppose that your rhetoric has prevailed on her to listen to reason, I will step in to reinforce your arguments.

Sir John. I'll fly to her immediately; you promise me your assistance?

Sterl. I do.

Sir John. Ten thousand thanks for it! and now success attend me! [*Going.*

Sterl. Hark'e, Sir John! [*Sir* JOHN *returns.*] Not a word of the thirty thousand to my sister, Sir John.

Sir John. Oh, I am dumb, I am dumb, sir. [*Going.*

Sterl. You'll remember it is thirty thousand.

Sir John. To be sure I do.

Sterl. But, Sir John!—one thing more. [*Sir* JOHN *returns.*] My lord must know nothing of this stroke of friendship between us.

Sir John. Not for the world. Let me alone! let me alone! [*Offering to go.*

Sterl. [*Holding him.*] And when every thing is agreed, we must give each other a bond to be held fast to the bargain.

Sir John. To be sure. A bond by all means! a bond, or whatever you please. [*Exit hastily.*

Sterl. I should have thought of more conditions—he's in a humour to give me every thing—Why, what mere children are your fellows of quality, that cry for a plaything one minute, and throw it by the next! as changeable as the weather, and as uncertain as the stocks!—Special fellows to drive a bargain! and yet they are to take care of the interest of the nation truly! Here does this whirligig man of fashion offer to give up thirty thousand pounds in hard money, with as much indifference as if it was a china orange. By this mortgage, I shall have a hold on his *terra firma*; and if he wants more money, as he certainly will, —let him have children by my daughter or no, I shall have his whole estate in a net for the benefit of my family.——Well, thus it is, that the children of citizens, who have acquired fortunes, prove persons of fashion; and thus it is, that persons of fashion, who have ruined their fortunes, reduce the next generation to cits. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to another Apartment.*

Enter Mrs HEIDELBERG *and Miss* STERLING.

Miss Sterl. This is your gentle-looking, soft-speaking, sweet-smiling, affable Miss Fanny for you!

Mrs Heidel. My Miss Fanny! I disclaim her. With all her arts, she never could insinuate herself into my good graces; and yet she has a way with her, that deceives man, woman, and child, except you and me, niece.

Mis Sterl. O ay; she wants nothing but a crook in her hand, and a lamb under her arm, to be a perfect picture of innocence and simplicity.

Mrs Heidel. Just as I was drawn at Amsterdam, when I went over to visit my husband's relations.

Miss Sterl. And then she's so mighty good to servants—'Pray, John, do this,—pray, to undo that —thank you, Jenny;' and then so humble to her relations—'To be sure, papa!—as my aunt pleases —my sister knows best.'——But, with all her demureness and humility, she has no objection to be Lady Melvil, it seems, nor to any wickedness that can make her so.

Mrs Heidel. She Lady Melvil! Compose yourself, niece; I'll ladyship her indeed:—a little creppin, cantin—She sha'n't be the better for a farden of my money. But tell me, child, how does this intriguing with Sir John correspond with her partiality to Lovewell? I don't see a concatunation here.

Miss Sterl. There I was deceived, madam. I took all their whisperings and stealing into corners, to be the mere attraction of vulgar minds; but, behold! their private meetings were not to contrive their own insipid happiness, but to conspire against mine. But I know whence proceeds Mr Lovewell's resentment to me. I could not stoop to be familiar with my father's clerk, and so I have lost his interest.

Mrs Heidel. My spirit to a T.—My dear child! [*Kisses her.*] Mr Heidelberg lost his election for member of parliament, because I would not demean myself to be slobbered about by drunken shoemakers, beastly cheesemongers, and greasy butchers and tallow-chandlers. However, niece, I cann't help diffuring a little in opinion from you in this matter. My experunce and sagacity makes me still suspect, that there is something more between her and that Lovewell, notwithstanding this affair of Sir John. I had my eye upon them the whole time of breakfast. Sir John, I observed, looked a little confounded, indeed, though I knew nothing of what had passed in the garden. You seemed to sit upon thorns too: But Fanny and Mr Lovewell made quite another guess sort of a figur; and were as perfect a picture of two distrest lovers, as if it had been drawn by Raphael Angelo. As to Sir John and Fanny, I want a matter of fact.

Miss Sterl. Matter of fact, madam! Did not I come unexpectedly upon them? Was not Sir John kneeling at her feet, and kissing her hand? Did not he look all love, and she all confusion? Is not that matter of fact? and did not Sir John, the moment that papa was called out of the room to the lawyer-men, get up from breakfast, and follow him immediately? And I warrant you that by this time he has made proposals to him to marry my sister——Oh, that some other person, an earl, or a duke, would make his addresses to me, that I might be revenged on this monster!

Mrs Heidel. Be cool, child! you shall be Lady Melvil, in spite of all their caballins, if it costs me ten thousand pounds to turn the scale. Sir John may apply to my brother, indeed, but I'll make them all know who governs in this fammaly.

Miss Sterl. As I live, madam, yonder comes Sir John. A base man! I cann't endure the sight of him. I'll leave the room this instant.

[*Disordered.*

Mrs Heidel. Poor thing! Well, retire to your own chamber, child; I'll give it him, I warrant you; and by and by I'll come and let you know all that has past between us.

Miss Sterl. Pray do, madam.—[*Looking back.*] ——A vile wretch! [*Exit in a rage.*

Enter Sir JOHN MELVIL.

Sir John. Your most obedient humble servant, madam. [*Bowing very respectfully.*

Mrs Heidel. Your servant, Sir John.

[*Dropping a half curtsey, and pouting.*

Sir John. Miss Stirling's manner of quitting the room on my approach, and the visible coolness of your behaviour to me, madam, convince me that she has acquainted you with what past this morning.

Mrs Heidel. I am very sorry, Sir John, to be made acquainted with any thing that should induce me to change the opinion which I would always wish to entertain of a person of qualaty.

[*Pouting.*

Sir John. It has always been my ambition to merit the best opinion from Mrs Heidelberg; and when she comes to weigh all circumstances, I flatter myself——

Mrs Heidel. You do flatter yourself, if you imagine that I can approve of your behaviour to my niece, Sir John.—And, give me leave to tell you, Sir John, that you have been drawn into an action much beneath you, Sir John; and that I look upon every injury offered to Miss Betty Sterling, as an affront to myself, Sir John. [*Warmly.*

Sir John. I would not offend you for the world, madam; but when I am influenced by a partiality for another, however ill-founded, I hope your discernment and good sense will think it rather a point of honour to renounce engagements, which I could not fulfil so strictly as I ought; and that you will excuse the change in my inclinations, since the new object, as well as the first, has the honour of being your niece, madam.

Mrs Heidel. I disclaim her as a niece, Sir John; Miss Sterling disclaims her as a sister, and the whole fammaly must disclaim her, for her monstrous baseness and treachery.

Sir John. Indeed she has been guilty of none madam. Her hand and her heart are, I am sure entirely at the disposal of yourself and Mr Sterling.

Enter STERLING *behind.*

And if you should not oppose my inclinations, I am sure of Mr Sterling's consent, madam.

Mrs Heidel. Indeed!

Sir John. Quite certain, madam.

Sterl, [*Behind.*] So! they seem to be coming to terms already I may venture to make my appearance.

Mrs Heidel. To marry Fanny?

[STERLING *advances by degrees.*

Sir John. Yes, madam.

Mrs Heidel. My brother has given his consent, you say?

Sir John. In the most ample manner, with no other restriction than the failure of your concurrence, madam. [*Sees* STERLING.]—Oh, here's Mr Sterling, who will confirm what I have told.

Mrs Heidel. What! have you consented to give up your own daughter in this manner, brother?

Sterl. Give her up! no, not give her up, sister; only in case that you——Zounds, I am afraid you have said too much, Sir John.

[*Apart to Sir* JOHN.

Mrs Heidel. Yes, yes; I see now that it is true enough what my niece told me. You are all plottin and caballin against her. Pray, does Lord Ogleby know of this affair?

Sir John. I have not yet made him acquainted with it, madam.

Mrs Heidel. No, I warrant you. I thought so. —And so his lordship and myself, truly, are not to be consulted till the last.

Sterl. What! did not you consult my lord? Oh, fie for shame, Sir John!

Sir John. Nay, but, Mr Sterling——

Mrs Heidel. We, who are the persons of most consequence and experunce in the two fammalies, are to know nothing of the matter, till the whole is as good as concluded upon. But his lordship, I am sure, will have more generosity than to countenance such a perceding. And I could not have expected such behaviour from a person of your qualaty, Sir John.—And as for you, brother,——

Sterl. Nay, nay, but hear me, sister.

Mrs Heidel. I am perfectly ashamed of you.—Have you no spurrit? no more concern for the honour of our fammaly than to consent——

Sterl. Consent! I consent! As I hope for mercy, I never gave my consent.———Did I consent, Sir John?

Sir John. Not absolutely, without Mrs Heidelberg's concurrence. But, in case of her approbation——

Sterl. Ay, I grant you, if my sister approved—But that's quite another thing, you know——

[*To Mrs* HEIDEL.

Mrs Heidel. Your sister approve, indeed!——I thought you knew her better, brother Sterling!——What! approve of having your eldest daughter returned upon your hands, and exchanged for the younger?——I am surprised how you could listen to such a scandalous proposal.

Sterl. I tell you, I never did listen to it.—Did not I say, that I would be entirely governed by my sister, Sir John?——And, unless she agreed to your marrying Fanny——

Mrs Heidel. I agree to his marrying Fanny!—abominable!—The man is absolutely out of his senses.——Cann't that wise head of yours foresee the consequence of all this, brother Sterling? Will Sir John take Fanny without a fortune?—No!——After you have settled the largest part of your property on your youngest daughter, can there be an equal portion left for the eldest? —No!——Does not this overturn the whole systum of the fammaly?—Yes, yes, yes!——You know I was always for my niece Betsey's marrying a person of the very first qualaty. That was my maxum:—and, therefore, much the largest settlement was, of course, to be made upon her. As for Fanny, if she could, with a fortune of twenty or thirty thousand pounds, get a knight, or a member of parliament, or a rich common councilman, for a husband, I thought it might do very well.

Sir John. But if a better match should offer itself, why should it not be accepted, madam?

Mrs Heidel. What, at the expence of her elder sister? O fie, Sir John! How could you bear to hear such an indignaty, brother Sterling?

Sterl. I! Nay, I sha'n't hear of it, I promise you.——I cann't hear of it, indeed, Sir John.

Mrs Heidel. But you have heard of it, brother Sterling.——You know you have; and sent Sir John to propose it to me. But if you can give up your daughter, I sha'n't forsake my niece, I assure you. Ah! if my poor dear Mr Heidelberg and our sweet babes had been alive, he would not have behaved so!

Sterl. Did I, Sir John?——Nay, speak!—Bring me off, or we are ruined.

[*Apart to Sir* JOHN.

Sir John. Why, to be sure, to speak the truth——

Mrs Heidel. To speak the truth, I'm ashamed of you both. But have a care what you are about, brother! have a care, I say. The counsellors are in the house, I hear; and if every thing is not settled to my liking, I'll have nothing more to say to you, if I live these hundred years.——I'll go over to Holland, and settle with Mr Vanderspracken, my poor husband's first cousin, and my own fammaly shall never be the better for a farden of my money, I promise you. [*Exit.*

Sterl. I thought so. I knew she never would agree to it.

Sir John. 'Sdeath, how unfortunate! What can we do, Mr Sterling?

Sterl. Nothing.

Sir John. What, must our agreement break off the moment it is made, then?

Sterl. It cann't be helped, Sir John. The family, as I told you before, have great expectations from my sister; and if this matter proceeds, you hear yourself that she threatens to leave us. —My brother Heidelberg was a warm man;—a very warm man; and died worth a plumb at least; a plumb! ay, I warrant you, he died worth a plumb and a half.

Sir John. Well; but if I———

Sterl. And then, my sister has three or four very good mortgages, a deal of money in the three per cents. and old South Sea annuities, besides large concerns in the Dutch and French funds. The greatest part of all this she means to leave to our family.

Sir John. I can only say, sir———

Sterl. Why, your offer of the difference of thirty thousand was very fair and handsome, to be sure, Sir John.

Sir John. Nay, but I am even willing to——

Sterl. Ay, but if I was to accept it against her will, I might lose above a hundred thousand; so you see the balance is against you, Sir John.

Sir John. But is there no way, do you think, of prevailing on Mrs Heidelberg to grant her consent?

Sterl. I am afraid not.——However, when her passion is a little abated—for she's very passionate—you may try what can be done: but you must not use my name any more, Sir John.

Sir John. Suppose I was to prevail on Lord Ogleby to apply to her, do you think that would have any influence over her?

Sterl. I think he would be more likely to persuade her to it than any other person in the family. She has a great respect for Lord Ogleby. She loves a lord.

Sir John. I'll apply to him this very day.—And if he should prevail on Mrs Heidelberg, I may depend on your friendship, Mr Sterling?

Ster. Ay, ay, I shall be glad to oblige you, when it is in my power; but as the account stands now, you see it is not upon the figures. And so your servant, Sir John. [*Exit.*

Sir John. What a situation am I in!—Breaking off with her whom I was bound by treaty to marry; rejected by the object of my affections; and embroiled with this turbulent woman, who governs the whole family. And yet opposition, instead of smothering, increases my inclination. I must have her. I'll apply immediately to Lord Ogleby; and if he can but bring over the aunt to our party, her influence will overcome the scruples and delicacy of my dear Fanny, and I shall be the happiest of mankind. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room.*

Enter Mr STERLING, *Mrs* HEIDELBERG, *and Miss* STERLING.

Sterl. What! will you send Fanny to town, sister?

Mrs Heidel. To-morrow morning. I've given orders about it already.

Sterl. Indeed!

Mrs Heidel. Posatively.

Sterl. But consider, sister, at such a time as this, what an odd appearance it will have.

Mrs Heidel. Not half so odd as her behaviour, brother.—This time was intended for happiness, and I'll keep no incendiaries here to destroy it. I insist on her going off to-morrow morning.

Sterl. I'm afraid this is all your doing, Betsey.

Miss Sterl. No, indeed, papa. My aunt knows that it is not.—For all Fanny's baseness to me, I am sure I would not do or say any thing to hurt her with you or my aunt for the world.

Mrs Heidel. Hold your tongue, Betsey; I will have my way.—When she is packed off, every thing will go on as it should do.——Since they are at their intrigues, I'll let them see that we can act with vigour on our part; and the sending her out of the way, shall be the purluminary step to all the rest of my perceedings.

Sterl. Well, but, sister———

Mrs Heidel. It does not signify talking, brother Sterling, for I'm resolved to be rid of her, and I will.—Come along, child. [*To Miss* STERLING.]—The post-shay shall be at the door by six o'clock in the morning; and if Miss Fanny does not get into it, why, I will—and so there's an end of the matter. [*Bounces out with Miss* STERLING; *then returns.*] One word more, brother Sterling.—I expect that you will take your eldest daughter in your hand, and make a formal complaint to Lord Ogleby, of Sir John Melvil's behaviour.—Do this, brother;—shew a proper regard for the honour of your fammaly yourself, and I shall throw in my mite to the raising of it. If not——but now you know my mind; so act as you please, and take the consequences. [*Exit.*

Sterl. The devil's in the women for tyranny! Mothers, wives, mistresses, or sisters, they always will govern us.——As to my sister Heidelberg, she knows the strength of her purse, and domineers upon the credit of it.——"I will do this," and "you shall do that," and "you shall do t'other,—or else the fammaly sha'n't have a farden of"—[*Mimicking.*]——So absolute with her money!—But, to say the truth, nothing but money can make us absolute, and so we must e'en make the best of her. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to the Garden.*

Enter Lord OGLEBY *and* CANTON.

Lord Og. What! Mademoiselle Fanny to be sent away!—Why?—Wherefore?—What's the meaning of all this?

Can. Je ne sçais pas.—I know nothing of it.

Lord Og. It cann't be—it sha'n't be:—I protest against the measure. She's a fine girl, and

I had much rather that the rest of the family were annihilated, than that she should leave us. —Her vulgar father, that's the very abstract of 'Change-alley—the aunt, that's always endeavouring to be a fine lady—and the pert sister, for ever shewing that she is one, are horrid company indeed, and without her, would be intolerable. Ah, la petite Fanchon! she's the thing: isn't she, Canton?

Can. Dere is very good sympatie entre vous, and dat young lady, mi lor.

Lord Og. I'll not be left among these Goths and Vandals, your Sterlings, your Heidelbergs, and Devilbergs——if she goes, I'll positively go too.

Can. In de same post-chay, mi lor? You have no objection to dat, I believe, nor mademoiselle neither too—ha, ha, ha!

Lord Og. Pr'ythee hold thy foolish tongue, Cant. Does thy Swiss stupidity imagine that I can see and talk with a fine girl without desires? ——My eyes are involuntarily attracted by beautiful objects—I fly as naturally to a fine girl——

Can. As de fine girl to you, my lor, ha, ha, ha! you alway fly togedre like un pair de pigeons—

Lord Og. Like un pair de pigeons—[*Mocks him.*]—Vous etes un sot, Mons. Canton—Thou art always dreaming of my intrigues, and never seest me badiner but you suspect some mischief, you old fool, you.

Can. I am fool, I confess, but not always fool in dat, my lor, he, he, he!

Lord Og. He, he, he!——Thou art incorrigible, but thy absurdities amuse one. Thou art like my rappee here, [*Takes out his box.*] a most ridiculous superfluity, but a pinch of thee now and then is a most delicious treat.

Can. You do me great honeur, mi lor.

Lord Og. 'Tis fact, upon my soul. Thou art properly my cephalic snuff, and art no bad medicine against megrims, vertigoes, and profound thinking—ha, ha, ha!

Can. Your flatterie, my lor, vil make me too prode.

Lord Og. The girl has some little partiality for me, to be sure: but pr'ythee, Cant. is not that Miss Fanny yonder?

Can. [*Looking with a glass.*] En verité, 'tis she, my lor—'tis one of de pigeons—de pigeons d'amour.

Lord Og. Don't be ridiculous, you old monkey. [*Smiling.*

Can. I am monkee, I am ole, but I have eye, I have ear, and a little understand, now and den.

Lord Og. Taisez vous, bête!

Can. Elle vous attend, my lor.—She vil make a love to you.

Lord Og. Will she? Have at her then! A fine girl cann't oblige me more—Egad, I find myself a little enjoué—Come along, Cant.! she is but in the next walk—but there is such a deal of this damned crinkum-crankum, as Sterling calls it, that one sees people for half an hour before one can get to them—Allons, Mons. Canton, allons, donc! [*Exeunt, singing in French.*

Another part of the Garden. LOVEWELL *and* FANNY.

Lov. My dear Fanny, I cannot bear your distress! it overcomes all my resolutions, and I am prepared for the discovery.

Fan. But how can it be effected before my departure?

Lov. I'll tell you.——Lord Ogleby seems to entertain a visible partiality for you; and, notwithstanding the peculiarities of his behaviour, I am sure that he is humane at the bottom. He is vain to an excess; but withal extremely good-natured, and would do any thing to recommend himself to a lady—Do you open the whole affair of our marriage to him immediately. It will come with more irresistible persuasion from you than from myself; and I doubt not but you'll gain his friendship and protection at once. His influence and authority will put an end to Sir John's solicitations, remove your aunt's and sister's unkindness and suspicions, and, I hope, reconcile your father and the whole family to our marriage.

Fan. Heaven grant it! Where is my lord?

Lov. I have heard him and Canton, since dinner, singing French songs under the great walnut-tree by the parlour-door. If you meet with him in the garden, you may disclose the whole immediately.

Fan. Dreadful as the task is, I'll do it.—— Any thing is better than this continual anxiety.

Lov. By that time the discovery is made, I will appear to second you.——Ha! here comes my lord.——Now, my dear Fanny, summon up all your spirits, plead our cause powerfully, and be sure of success.——— [*Going.*

Fan. Ah, don't leave me!

Lov. Nay, you must let me.

Fan. Well, since it must be so, I'll obey you, if I have the power. Oh, Lovewell!

Lov. Consider, our situation is very critical. To-morrow morning is fixed for our departure, and if we lose this opportunity, we may wish in vain for another.——He approaches—I must retire.——Speak, my dear Fanny, speak, and make us happy! [*Exit.*

Fan. Good Heaven! what a situation am I in! what shall I do? What shall I say to him? I am all confusion.

Enter Lord OGLEBY *and* CANTON.

Lord Og. To see so much beauty so solitary, madam, is a satire upon mankind, and 'tis fortunate that one man has broke in upon your reverie for the credit of our sex. I say one, madam; for poor Canton here, from age and infirmities, stands for nothing.

Can. Noting at all, indeed.

Fan. Your lordship does me great honour.—— I had a favour to request, my lord!

Lord Og. A favour, madam!——To be honoured with your commands, is an inexpressible favour done to me, madam.

Fan. If your lordship could indulge me with

the honour of a moment's——What is the matter with me? [*Aside.*

Lord Og. The girl's confused——He!——here's something in the wind, faith—I'll have a tête-a-tête with her——Allez vous en! [*To* Canton.

Can. I go——Ah, pauvre mademoiselle! my lor, have pitié upon the poor pigeone!

Lord Og. I'll knock you down, Cant. if you're impertinent. [*Smiling.*

Can. Den I mus away. [*Shuffles along.*]——You are mosh please, for all dat. [*Aside and exit.*

Fan. I shall sink with apprehension. [*Aside.*

Lord Og. What a sweet girl——she's a civilized being, and atones for the barbarism of the rest of the family.

Fan. My lord! I——[*She curtsies and blushes.*

Lord Og. [*Addressing her.*] I look upon it, madam, to be one of the luckiest circumstances of my life, that I have this moment the honour of receiving your commands, and the satisfaction of confirming with my tongue, what my eyes perhaps have but too weakly expressed—that I am literally—the humblest of your servants.

Fan. I think myself greatly honoured by your lordship's partiality to me; but it distresses me, that I am obliged in my present situation to apply to it for protection.

Lord Og. I am happy in your distress, madam, because it gives me an opportunity to shew my zeal. Beauty to me is a religion in which I was born and bred a bigot, and would die a martyr. ——I'm in tolerable spirits, faith! [*Aside.*

Fan. There is not, perhaps, at this moment, a more distressed creature than myself. Affection, duty, hope, despair, and a thousand different sentiments, are struggling in my bosom; and even the presence of your lordship, to whom I have flown for protection, adds to my perplexity.

Lord Og. Does it, madam?——Venus forbid! ——My old fault; the devil's in me, I think, for perplexing young women. [*Aside and smiling.*] Take courage, madam! Dear Miss Fanny, explain. ——You have a powerful advocate in my breast, I assure you——My heart, madam——I am attached to you by all the laws of sympathy and delicacy.——By my honour, I am.

Fan. Then I will venture to unburthen my mind——Sir John Melvil, my lord, by the most misplaced and mistimed declaration of affection for me, has made me the unhappiest of women.

Lord Og. How, madam! Has Sir John made his addresses to you?

Fan. He has, my lord, in the strongest terms. But I hope it is needless to say, that my duty to my father, love to my sister, and regard to the whole family, as well as the great respect I entertain for your lordship, [*Curtseying.*] made me shudder at his addresses.

Lord Og. Charming girl!—Proceed, my dear Miss Fanny, proceed!

Fan. In a moment——give me leave, my lord! ——But if what I have to disclose should be received with anger or displeasure——

Lord Og. Impossible, by all the tender powers! Speak, I beseech you, or I shall divine the cause before you utter it.

Fan. Then, my lord, Sir John's addresses are not only shocking to me in themselves, but are more particularly disagreeable to me at this time —as—as— [*Hesitating.*

Lord Og. As what, madam?

Fan. As—pardon my confusion—I am entirely devoted to another.

Lord Og. If this is not plain, the devil's in it ——[*Aside.*] But tell me, my dear Miss Fanny, for I must know; tell me the how, the when, and the where——Tell me——

Enter Canton *hastily.*

Can. My lor, my lor, my lor!

Lord Og. Damn your Swiss impertinence! how durst you interrupt me in the most critical melting moment that ever love and beauty honoured me with?

Can. I demande pardonne, my lor! Sir John Melvil, my lor, sent me to beg you do him de honeur to speak a little to your lordship.

Lord Og. I'm not at leisure—I am busy—Get away, you stupid old dog, you Swiss rascal, or I'll——

Can. Fort bien, my lor.

[Canton *goes out on tiptoe.*

Lord Og. By the laws of gallantry, madam, this interruption should be death; but as no punishment ought to disturb the triumph of the softer passions, the criminal is pardoned and dismissed. Let us return, madam, to the highest luxury of exalted minds—a declaration of love from the lips of beauty.

Fan. The entrance of a third person has a little relieved me, but I cannot go through with it; and yet I must open my heart with a discovery, or it will break with its burthen. [*Aside.*

Lord Og. What passion in her eyes! I am alarmed to agitation. [*Aside.*] I presume, madam, (and, as you have flattered me, by making me a party concerned, I hope you'll excuse the presumption) that——

Fan. Do you excuse my making you a party concerned, my lord, and let me interest your heart in my behalf, as my future happiness or misery in a great measure depends——

Lord Og. Upon me, madam?

Fan. Upon you, my lord. [*Sighs.*

Lord Og. There's no standing this: I have caught the infection—her tenderness dissolves me. [*Sighs.*

Fan. And should you too severely judge of a rash action which passion prompted, and modesty has long concealed——

Lord Og. [*Taking her hand.*] Thou amiable creature, command my heart, for it is vanquished. Speak but thy virtuous wishes, and enjoy them.

Fan. I cannot, my lord; indeed, I cannot. Mr Lovewell must tell you my distresses; and when you know them, pity and protect me.

[*Exit in tears.*

Lord Og. How the devil could I bring her to

this? It is too much—too much—I cann't bear it—I must give way to this amiable weakness. [*Wipes his eyes.*] My heart overflows with sympathy, and I feel every tenderness I have inspired. [*Stifles a tear.*] How blind have I been to the desolation I have made! How could I possibly imagine that a little partial attention and tender civilities to this young creature should have gathered to this burst of passion! Can I be a man, and withstand it? No—I'll sacrifice the whole sex to her. But here comes the father, quite apropos. I'll open the matter immediately, settle the business with him, and take the sweet girl down to Ogleby house to-morrow morning.—But what the devil! Miss Sterling too! What mischief's in the wind now?

Enter Mr STERLING *and Miss* STERLING.

Sterl. My lord, your servant! I am attending my daughter here upon rather a disagreeable affair. Speak to his lordship, Betsey.

Lord Og. Your eyes, Miss Sterling,—for I always read the eyes of a young lady,—betray some little emotion. What are your commands, madam?

Miss Sterl. I have but too much cause for my emotion, my lord!

Lord Og. I cannot commend my kinsman's behaviour, madam. He has behaved like a false knight, I must confess. I have heard of his apostacy. Miss Fanny has informed me of it.

Miss Sterl. Miss Fanny's baseness has been the cause of Sir John's inconstancy.

Lord Og. Nay, now, my dear Miss Sterling, your passion transports you too far. Sir John may have entertained a passion for Miss Fanny, but, believe me, my dear Miss Sterling, believe me, Miss Fanny has no passion for Sir John. She has a passion, indeed, a most tender passion. She has opened her whole soul to me, and I know where her affections are placed. [*Conceitedly.*

Miss Sterl. Not upon Mr Lovewell, my lord; for I have great reason to think that her seeming attachment to him is, by his consent, made use of as a blind to cover her designs upon Sir John.

Lord Og. Lovewell! No, poor lad! She does not think of him. [*Smiling.*

Miss Sterl. Have a care, my lord, that both the families are not made the dupes of Sir John's artifice and my sister's dissimulation! You don't know her; indeed, my lord, you don't know her; a base, insinuating, perfidious!—It is too much—She has been beforehand with me, I perceive. Such unnatural behaviour to me! But, since I see I can have no redress, I am resolved that, some way or other, I will have revenge. [*Exit.*

Sterl. This is foolish work, my lord!

Lord Og. I have too much sensibility to bear the tears of beauty.

Sterl. It is touching, indeed, my lord; and very moving for a father.

Lord Og. To be sure, sir! You must be distressed beyond measure! Wherefore, to divert your too exquisite feeling, suppose we change the subject, and proceed to business.

Sterl. With all my heart, my lord!

Lord Og. You see, Mr Sterling, we can make no union in our families by the proposed marriage.

Sterl. And I am very sorry to see it, my lord.

Lord Og. Have you set your heart upon being allied to our house, Mr Sterling!

Sterl. 'Tis my only wish at present, my omnium, as I may call it.

Lord Og. Your wishes shall be fulfilled.

Sterl. Shall they, my lord! but how—how?

Lord Og. I'll marry in your family.

Sterl. What! my sister Heidelberg?

Lord Og. You throw me into a cold sweat, Mr Sterling. No, not your sister, but your daughter.

Sterl. My daughter!

Lord Og. Fanny!—now the murder's out!

Sterl. What! you, my lord?

Lord Og. Yes; I, I, Mr Sterling!

Sterl. No, no, my lord; that's too much. [*Smiling.*

Lord Og. Too much! I don't comprehend you.

Sterl. What, you, my lord, marry my Fanny! Bless me, what will the folks say?

Lord Og. Why, what will they say?

Sterl. That you're a bold man, my lord: that's all.

Lord Og. Mr Sterling, this may be city wit for aught I know. Do you court my alliance?

Sterl. To be sure, my lord.

Lord Og. Then I'll explain—My nephew won't marry your eldest daughter; nor I neither.—— Your youngest daughter won't marry him; I will marry your youngest daughter.

Sterl. What! with a youngest daughter's fortune, my lord?

Lord Og With any fortune, or no fortune at all, sir. Love is the idol of my heart, and the dæmon Interest sinks before him. So, sir, as I said before, I will marry your youngest daughter; your youngest daughter will marry me.

Sterl. Who told you so, my lord?

Lord Og. Her own sweet self, sir.

Sterl. Indeed?

Lord Og. Yes, sir; our affection is mutual; your advantage double and treble; your daughter will be a countess directly—I shall be the happiest of beings; and you'll be father to an earl instead of a baronet.

Sterl. But what will my sister say, and my daughter?

Lord Og. I'll manage that matter; nay, if they won't consent, I'll run away with your daughter in spite of you.

Sterl. Well said, my lord! your spirit's good; I wish you had my constitution; but, if you'll venture, I have no objection, if my sister has none.

Lord Og. I'll answer for your sister, sir. Apropos! the lawyers are in the house. I'll have articles drawn, and the whole affair concluded to-morrow morning.

Sterl. Very well! and I'll dispatch Lovewell to London immediately for some fresh papers I shall want, and I shall leave you to manage matters with my sister. You must excuse me, my lord, but I cann't help laughing at the match.—He, he, he! what will the folks say? [*Exit.*

Lord Og. What a fellow am I going to make a father of? He has no more feeling than the post in his warehouse—But Fanny's virtues tune me to rapture again, and I won't think of the rest of the family.

Enter Lovewell, *hastily.*

Lov. I beg your lordship's pardon, my lord; are you alone, my lord?

Lord Og. No, my lord, I am not alone; I am in company, the best company.

Lov. My lord!

Lord Og. I never was in such exquisite enchanting company since my heart first conceived, or my senses tasted pleasure.

Lov. Where are they, my lord? [*Looking about.*

Lord Og. In my mind, sir.

Lov. What company have you there, my lord? [*Smiling.*

Lord Og. My own ideas, sir, which so crowd upon my imagination, and kindle in it such a delirium of ecstacy, that wit, wine, music, poetry, all combined, and each perfection, are but mere mortal shadows of my felicity.

Lov. I see that your lordship is happy, and I rejoice at it.

Lord Og. You shall rejoice at it, sir; my felicity shall not selfishly be confined, but shall spread its influence to the whole circle of my friends. I need not say, Lovewell, that you shall have your share of it.

Lov. Shall I, my lord?—then I understand you; you have heard; Miss Fanny has informed you——

Lord Og She has; I have heard, and she shall be happy; 'tis determined.

Lov. Then I have reached the summit of my wishes. And will your lordship pardon the folly?

Lord Og. O yes, poor creature, how could she help it? 'Twas unavoidable—Fate and necessity.

Lov. It was indeed, my lord. Your kindness distracts me.

Lord Og. And so it did the poor girl, faith.

Lov. She trembled to disclose the secret, and declare her affections?

Lord Og. The world, I believe, will not think her affections ill placed.

Lov. [*Bowing.*] You are too good, my lord.—— And do you really excuse the rashness of the action?

Lord Og. From my very soul, Lovewell.

Lov. Your generosity overpowers me. [*Bowing.*] I was afraid of her meeting with a cold reception.

Lord Og. More fool you then.

"Who pleads her cause with never-failing beauty,
Here finds a full redress. [*Strikes his breast.*

She's a fine girl, Lovewell.

Lov. Her beauty, my lord, is her least merit. She has an understanding——

Lord Og. Her choice convinces me of that.

Lov. [*Bowing.*[That's your lordship's goodness. Her choice was a disinterested one.

Lord Og. No, no; not altogether; it began with interest, and ended in passion.

Lov. Indeed, my lord, if you were acquainted with her goodness of heart, and generosity of mind, as well as you are with the inferior beauties of her face and person——

Lord Og. I am so perfectly convinced of their existence, and so totally of your mind, touching every amiable particular of that sweet girl, that, were it not for the cold unfeeling impediments of the law, I would marry her to-morrow morning.

Lov. My lord!

Lord Og. I would, by all that's honourable in man, and amiable in woman.

Lov. Marry her!——What do you mean, my lord?

Lord Og. Miss Fanny Sterling that is; the Countess of Ogleby that shall be.

Lov. I am astonish'd!

Lord Og. Why, could you expect less from me?

Lov. I did not expect this, my lord.

Lord Og. Trade and accounts have destroyed your feeling.

Lov. No, indeed, my lord. [*Sighs.*

Lord Og. The moment that love and pity entered my breast, I was resolved to plunge into matrimony, and shorten the girl's tortures—I never do any thing by halves: do I, Lovewell?

Lov. No, indeed, my lord. [*Sighs.*] What an accident!

Lord Og. What's the matter, Lovewell? thou seem'st to have lost thy faculties. Why don't you wish me joy, man?

Lov. O, I do, my lord. [*Sighs.*

Lord Og. She said that you would explain what she had not power to utter; but I wanted no interpreter for the language of love.

Lov. But has your lordship considered the consequences of your resolution?

Lord Og. No, sir, I am above consideration, when my desires are kindled.

Lov. But consider the consequences, my lord, to your nephew, Sir John.

Lord Og. Sir John has considered no consequences himself, Mr Lovewell.

Lov. Mr Sterling, my lord, will certainly refuse his daughter to Sir John.

Lord Og. Sir John has already refused Mr Sterling's daughter.

Lov. But what will become of Miss Sterling, my lord?

Lord Og. What's that to you?——You may have her if you will. I depend upon Mr Sterling's city-philosophy, to be reconciled to Lord Ogleby's being his son-in-law, instead of Sir John Melvil, baronet. Don't you think that your master may be brought to that, without having recourse to his calculations—Eh, Lovewell?

Lov. But, my lord, that is not the question.

Lord Og. Whatever is the question, I'll tell you my answer.——I am in love with a fine girl, whom I resolve to marry.

Enter Sir John Melvil.

What news with you, Sir John?—You look all hurry and impatience—like a messenger after a battle.

Sir John. After a battle, indeed, my lord. I

have this day had a severe engagement, and, wanting your lordship as an auxiliary, I have at last mustered up resolution to declare what my duty to you and to myself have demanded from me some time.

Lord Og. To the business then, and be as concise as possible, for I am upon the wing—eh, Lovewell? [*He smiles, and* LOVEWELL *bows.*

Sir John. I find 'tis in vain, my lord, to struggle against the force of inclination.

Lord Og. Very true, nephew; I am your witness, and will second the motion——sha'n't I, Lovewell? [*Smiles, and* LOVEWELL *bows.*

Sir John. Your lordship's generosity encourages me to tell you, that I cannot marry Miss Sterling.

Lord Og. I am not at all surprised at it—she's a bitter potion, that's the truth of it; but as you were to swallow it, and not I, it was your business, and not mine——Any thing more?

Sir John. But this, my lord; that I may be permitted to make my addresses to the other sister.

Lord Og. O yes; by all means——have you any hopes there, nephew?—Do you think he'll succeed, Lovewell?

[*Smiles, and winks at* LOVEWELL.

Lov. I think not, my lord. [*Gravely.*

Lord Og. I think so too; but let the fool try.

Sir John. Will your lordship favour me with your good offices to remove the chief obstacle to the match, the repugnance of Mrs Heidelberg?

Lord Og. Mrs Heidelberg!—Had not you better begin with the young lady first? It will save you a great deal of trouble: won't it, Lovewell? [*Smiles.*] But do what you please, it will be the same thing to me: won't it, Lovewell? [*Conceitedly.*] Why don't you laugh at him?

Lov. I do, my lord. [*Forces a smile.*

Sir John. And your lordship will endeavour to prevail on Mrs Heidelberg to consent to my marriage with Miss Fanny?

Lord Og. I'll speak to Mrs Heidelberg about the adorable Fanny as soon as possible.

Sir John. Your generosity transports me.

Lord Og. Poor fellow, what a dupe! he little thinks who's in possession of the town. [*Aside.*

Sir John. And your lordship is not in the least offended at this seeming inconstancy?

Lord Og. Not in the least. Miss Fanny's charms will even excuse infidelity. I look upon women as the *feræ naturæ*—lawful game—and every man who is qualified, has a natural right to pursue them;—Lovewell as well as you, and I as well as either of you.—Every man shall do his best, without offence to any——what say you, kinsmen?

Sir John. You have made me happy, my lord.

Lov. And me, I assure you, my lord.

Lord Og. And I am superlatively so—*allons donc!*—to horse and away, boys!—you to your affairs, and I to mine——*suivons l'amour.* [*Sings.*

[*Exeunt severally.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—FANNY'S *Appartment.*

Enter LOVEWELL *and* FANNY, *followed by* BETTY.

Fan. Why did you come so soon, Mr Lovewell? the family is not yet in bed, and Betty certainly heard somebody listening near the chamber door.

Bet. My mistress is right, sir: evil spirits are abroad; and I am sure you are both too good, not to expect mischief from them.

Lov. But who can be so curious, or so wicked?

Bet. I think we have wickedness and curiosity enough in this family, sir, to expect the worst.

Fan. I do expect the worst.——Pr'ythee, Betty, return to the outward door, and listen if you hear any body in the gallery; and let us know directly.

Bet. I warrant you, madam—the lord bless you both! [*Exit.*

Fan. What did my father want with you this evening?

Lov. He gave me the key of his closet, with orders to bring from London some papers relating to Lord Ogleby.

Fan. And why did you not obey him?

Lov. Because I am certain that his lordship has opened his heart to him about you, and those papers are wanted merely on that account——but, as we shall discover all to-morrow, there will be no occasion for them, and it would be idle in me to go.

Fan. Hark!—hark! bless me, how I tremble!——I feel the terrors of guilt——indeed, Mr Lovewell, this is too much for me.

Lov. And for me too, my sweet Fanny. Your apprehensions make a coward of me.——But what can alarm you? your aunt and sister are in their chambers, and you have nothing to fear from the rest of the family.

Fan. I fear every body, and every thing, and every moment——My mind is in continual agitation and dread; indeed, Mr Lovewell, this situation may have very unhappy consequences.

[*Weeps.*

Lov. But it sha'n't——I would rather tell our story this moment to all the house, and run the risque of maintaining you by the hardest labour, than suffer you to remain in this dangerous perplexity.—What! shall I sacrifice all my best hopes and affections, in your dear health and safety, for the mean, and in such case, the meanest consideration—of our fortune!—Were we to be abandoned by all our relations, we have that in our hearts and minds will weigh against the most affluent cir-

cumstances. I should not have proposed the secrecy of our marriage, but for your sake; and with hopes that the most generous sacrifice you have made to love and me, might be less injurious to you, by waiting a lucky moment of reconciliation.

Fan. Hush! hush! for Heaven's sake, my dear Lovewell, don't be so warm! your generosity gets the better of your prudence; you will be heard, and we shall be discovered.——I am satisfied—indeed I am——Excuse this weakness, this delicacy, this what you will.——My mind's at peace—indeed it is—think no more of it, if you love me!

Lov. That one word has charmed me, as it always does, to the most implicit obedience: it would be the worst of ingratitude in me to distress you a moment. [*Kisses her.*

Re-enter Betty.

Bet. [*In a low voice.*] I'm sorry to disturb you.

Fan. Ha! what's the matter?

Lov. Have you heard any body?

Bet. Yes, yes, I have; and they have heard you too, or I'm mistaken—if they had seen you too, we should have been in a fine quandary!

Fan. Pr'ythee, don't prate now, Betty!

Lov. What did you hear?

Bet. I was preparing myself, as usual, to take me a little nap——

Lov. A nap?

Bet. Yes, sir, a nap; for I watch much better so than wide awake; and when I had wrapped this handkerchief round my head, for fear of the ear-ach from the key-hole, I thought I heard a kind of a sort of buzzing, which I first took for a gnat, and shook my head two or three times, and went so with my hand.

Fan. Well—well—and so——

Bet. And so, madam, when I heard Mr Lovewell a little loud, I heard the buzzing louder too ——and, pulling off my handkerchief softly, I could hear this sort of noise——

[*Makes an indistinct sort of noise like speaking.*

Fan. Well, and what did they say?

Bet. O! I could not understand a word of what was said.

Lov. The outward door is lock'd?

Bet. Yes; and I bolted it too, for fear of the worst.

Fan. Why did you? they must have heard you, if they were near.

Bet. And I did it on purpose, madam, and cough'd a little too, that they might not hear Mr Lovewell's voice—when I was silent, they were silent, and so I came to tell you.

Fan. What shall we do?

Lov. Fear nothing; we know the worst; it will only bring on our catastrophe a little too soon—but Betty might fancy this noise—she's in the conspiracy, and can make a man of a mouse at any time.

Bet. I can distinguish a man from a mouse as well as my betters——I'm sorry you think so ill of me, sir.

Fan. He compliments you; don't be a fool! ——Now you have set her tongue a-running, she'll mutter for an hour. [*To* Lovewell.] I'll go and harken myself. [*Exit.*

Bet. I'll turn my back upon no girl for sincerity and service. [*Half aside, and muttering.*

Lov. Thou art the first in the world for both; and I will reward you soon, Betty, for one and the other.

Bet. I am not mercenary neither—I can live on a little, with a good carreter.

Re-enter Fanny.

Fan. All seems quiet—Suppose, my dear, you go to your own room—I shall be much easier then—and to-morrow we will be prepared for the discovery.

Bet. You may discover, if you please; but, for my part, I shall still be secret

[*Half aside, and muttering.*

Lov. Should I leave you now, if they still are upon the watch, we shall lose the advantage of our delay. Besides, we should consult upon to-morrow's business. Let Betty go to her own room, and lock the outward door after her; we can fasten this; and when she thinks all safe, she may return and let me out as usual.

Bet. Shall I, madam?

Fan. Do! let me have my way to-night, and you shall command me ever after. I would not have you surprised here for the world. Pray leave me! I shall be quite myself again, if you will oblige me.

Lov. I live only to oblige you, my sweet Fanny! I'll be gone this moment. [*Going.*

Fan. Let us listen first at the door, that you may not be intercepted. Betty shall go first, and, if they lay hold of her————

Bet. They'll have the wrong sow by the ear, I can tell them that. [*Going hastily.*

Fan. Softly—softly—Betty! don't venture out, if you hear a noise. Softly, I beg of you! See, Mr Lovewell, the effects of indiscretion!

Lov. But love, Fanny, makes amends for all.

[*Exeunt all softly.*

SCENE II.— *Changes to a Gallery which leads to several Bed-chambers.*

Enter Miss Sterling, *leading Mrs* Heidelberg *in a Night-cap.*

Mis Sterl. This way, dear madam, and then I'll tell you all.

Mrs Heidel. Nay, but niece—consider a little ——don't drag me out this figure; let me put on my fly-cap!—if any of my lord's fammaly, or the counsellors at law, should be stirring, I should be perdigus disconcerted.

Miss Sterl. But, my dear madam, a moment is an age in my situation. I am sure my sister has been plotting my disgrace and ruin in that chamber——O! she's all craft and wickedness.

Mrs Heidel. Well, but softly, Betsey!—you are all in emotion—Your mind is too much flustrated—you can neither eat, nor drink, nor take

your natural rest—compose yourself, child; for, if we are not as warysome as they are wicked, we shall disgrace ourselves and the whole fammaly.

Miss Sterl. We are disgraced already, madam. Sir John Melvil has forsaken me; my lord cares for nobody but himself; or, if any body, it is my sister; my father, for the sake of a better bargain, would marry me to a 'Change broker; so that, if you, madam, don't continue my friend—if you forsake me—if I am to lose my best hopes and consolation—in your tenderness—and affections—I had better—at once—give up the matter—and let my sister enjoy—the fruits of her treachery—trample with scorn upon the rights of her elder sister, the will of the best of aunts, and the weakness of a too interested father.

[*She pretends to be bursting into tears all this speech.*

Mrs Heidel. Don't, Betsey—keep up your spurrit—I hate whimpering—I am your friend—depend upon me in every particular—but be composed, and tell me what new mischief you have discovered?

Miss Sterl. I had no desire to sleep, and would not undress myself, knowing that my Machiavel sister would not rest till she had broke my heart:—I was so uneasy that I could not stay in my room; but, when I thought that all the house was quiet, I sent my maid to discover what was going forward; she immediately came back, and told me that they were in high consultation; that she had heard only, (for it was in the dark,) my sister's maid conduct Sir John Melvil to her mistress, and then lock the door.

Mrs Heidel. And how did you conduct yourself in this dalimma?

Miss Sterl. I returned with her, and could hear a man's voice, though nothing that they said distinctly; and you may depend upon it, that Sir John is now in that room, that they have settled the matter, and will run away together before morning, if we don't prevent them.

Mrs Heidel. Why, the brazen slut! she has got her sister's husband (that is to be) lock'd up in her chamber! at night too!—I tremble at the thoughts!

Mis Sterl. Hush, madam! I hear something.

Mrs Heidel. You frighten me—let me put on my fly-cap——I would not be seen in this figur for the world.

Miss Sterl. 'Tis dark, madam; you cann't be seen.

Mrs Heidel. I protest there's a candle coming, and a man too!

Miss Sterl. Nothing but servants; let us retire a moment! [*They retire.*

Enter BRUSH, *half drunk, laying hold of the Chambermaid, who has a Candle in her Hand.*

Cham. Be quiet, Mr Brush; I shall drop down with terror!

Brush. But my sweet, and most amiable chambermaid, if you have no love, you may hearken to a little reason; that cannot possibly do your virtue any harm.

Cham. But you may do me harm, Mr Brush, and a great deal of harm too; pray let me go; I am ruined if they hear you; I tremble like an asp.

Brush. But they sha'n't hear us; and if you have a mind to be ruined, it shall be the making of your fortune, you little slut, you! therefore I say it again, if you have no love, hear a little reason!

Cham. I wonder at your impurence, Mr Brush, to use me in this manner; this is not the way to keep me company, I assure you. You are a townrake, I see, and now you are a little in liquor, you fear nothing.

Brush. Nothing, by Heavens, but your frowns, most amiable chambermaid; I am a little electrified, that's the truth on't; I am not used to drink port, and your master's is so heady, that a pint of it oversets a claret-drinker.

Cham. Don't be rude! bless me!—I shall be ruined—what will become of me?

Brush. I'll take care of you, by all that's honourable.

Cham. You are a base man to use me so—I'll cry out, if you don't let me go. That is Miss Sterling's chamber, that Miss Fanny's, and that Madam Heidelberg's.

Brush. And that my lord Ogleby's, and that my Lady What-d'ye-call-em: I don't mind such folks when I'm sober, much less when I am whimsical—rather above that too.

Cham. More shame for you, Mr Brush!—you terrify me—you have no modesty.

Brush. O, but I have, my sweet spider-brusher!—for instance; I reverence Miss Fanny—she's a most delicious morsel, and fit for a prince.—— With all my horrors of matrimony, I could marry her myself—but for her sister——

Miss Sterl. There, there, madam, all in a story!

Cham. Bless me, Mr Brush!—I heard something!

Brush. Rats, I suppose, that are gnawing the old timbers of this execrable old dungeon—If it was mine, I would pull it down, and fill your fine canal up with the rubbish; and then I should get rid of two damn'd things at once.

Cham. Law! law! how you blaspheme!—we shall have the house upon our heads for it.

Brush. No, no, it will last our time—but, as I was saying, the eldest sister——Miss Jezebel——

Cham. Is a fine young lady, for all your evil tongue.

Brush. No——we have smoaked her already; and, unless she marries our old Swiss, she can have none of us——No, no, she won't do—we are a little too nice.

Cham. You're a monstrous rake, Mr Brush, and don't care what you say.

Brush. Why, for that matter, my dear, I am a little inclined to mischief; and if you don't have pity upon me, I will break open that door, and ravish Mrs Heidelberg.

Mrs Heidel. [*Coming forward*] There's no bearing this—you profligate monster!

Cham. Ha! I am undone!

Brush. Zounds! here she is, by all that's monstrous! [*Runs off.*

Miss Sterl. A fine discourse you have had with that fellow!

Mrs Heidel. And a fine time of night it is to be here with that drunken monster!

Miss Sterl. What have you to say for yourself?

Cham. I can say nothing—I'm so frightened, and so ashamed—but indeed I am vartuous—I am vartuous, indeed.

Mrs Heidel. Well, well—don't tremble so; but tell us what you know of this horrible plot here.

Miss Sterl. We'll forgive you, if you'll discover all.

Cham. Why, madam—don't let me betray my fellow servants—I sha'n't sleep in my bed, if I do.

Mrs Heidel. Then you shall sleep somewhere else to-morrow night.

Cham. O dear! what shall I do?

Mrs Heidel. Tell us this moment, or I'll turn you out of doors directly.

Cham. Why, our butler has been treating us below in his pantry—Mr Brush forced us to make a kind of a holiday night of it.

Miss Sterl. Holiday! for what?

Cham. Nay, I only made one.

Miss Sterl. Well, well; but upon what account?

Cham. Because, as how, madam, there was a change in the family, they said,——that his honour, Sir John, was to marry Miss Fanny instead of your ladyship.

Miss Sterl. And so you make a holiday for that—Very fine!

Cham. I did not make it, ma'am.

Mrs Heidel. But do you know nothing of Sir John's being to run away with Miss Fanny to-night?

Cham. No, indeed, ma'am!

Miss Sterl. Nor of his being now locked up in my sister's chamber?

Cham. No, as I hope for marcy, ma'am.

Mrs Heidel. Well, I'll put an end to all this directly——do you run to my brother Sterling——

Cham. Now, ma'am!—'Tis so very late, ma'am—

Mrs Heidel. I don't care how late it is. Tell him there are thieves in the house—that the house is on fire—tell him to come here immediately—Go, I say.

Cham. I will, I will, though I'm frighten'd out of my wits. [*Exit.*

Mrs Heidel. Do you watch here, my dear; and I'll put myself in order, to face them. We'll plot 'em, and counter-plot 'em too.

[*Exit into her chamber.*

Miss Sterl. I have as much pleasure in this revenge, as in being made a countess.——Ha! they are unlocking the door.——Now for it! [*Retires.*

FANNY'S *Door is unlock'd, and* BETTY *comes out with a Candle.* *Miss* STERLING *approaches her.*

Bet. [*Calling within.*] Sir! sir!—now's your time—all's clear. [*Seeing Miss* STERL.] Stay, stay—not yet—we are watch'd.

Miss Sterl. And so you are, madam Betty.

[*Miss* STERL. *lays hold of her, while* BETTY *locks the door, and puts the key into her pocket.*

Bet. [*Turning round.*] What's the matter, madam?

Miss Sterl. Nay, that you shall tell my father and aunt, madam.

Bet. I am no tell-tale, madam, and no thief; they'll get nothing from me.

Miss Sterl. You have a great deal of courage, Betty; and, considering the secrets you have to keep, you have occasion for it.

Bet. My mistress shall never repent her good opinion of me, ma'am.

Enter Mr STERLING.

Sterl. What's all this? What's the matter? Why am I disturb'd in this manner?

Miss Sterl. This creature, and my distresses, sir, will explain the matter.

Re-enter Mrs HEIDELBERG, *with another head-dress.*

Mrs Heidel. Now I'm prepared for the rancounter.——Well, brother, have you heard of this scene of wickedness?

Sterl. Not I—but what is it? speak.——I was got into my little closet, all the lawyers were in bed, and I had almost lost my senses in the confusion of Lord Ogleby's mortgages, when I was alarmed with a foolish girl, who could hardly speak; and whether it's fire, or thieves, or murder, or a rape, I'm quite in the dark.

Mrs Heidel. No, no, there's no rape, brother!—all parties are willing, I believe.

Miss Sterl. Who's in that chamber?

[*Detaining* BET. *who seemed to be stealing away.*

Bet. My mistress.

Miss Sterl. And who's with your mistress?

Bet. Why, who should there be?

Mis Sterl. Open the door then, and let us see.

Bet. The door is open, madam. [*Miss* STERL. *goes to the door.*] I'll sooner die than peach.

[*Exit hastily.*

Miss Sterl. The door is lock'd; and she has got the key in her pocket.

Mrs Heidel. There's impudence, brother! piping hot from your daughter Fanny's school!

Sterl. But, zounds! what is all this about? You tell me of a sum total, and you don't produce the particulars.

Mrs Heidel. Sir John Melvil is locked up in your daughter's bed-chamber—There is the particular.

Sterl. The devil he is!——That's bad.

Miss Sterl. And he has been there some time too.

Sterl. Ditto!

Mrs Heidel. Ditto! worse and worse, I say. I'll raise the house, and expose him to my lord, and the whole fammaly.

Sterl. By no means! we shall expose ourselves, sister!—the best way is to insure privately—let me alone! I'll make him marry her to-morrow morning.

Miss Sterl. Make him marry her! this is beyond all patience!—You have thrown away all

your affection; and I shall do as much by my obedience; unnatural fathers make unnatural children. My revenge is in my own power, and I'll indulge it.——Had they made their escape, I should have been exposed to the derision of the world: but the deriders shall be derided; and so ——help! help there! thieves! thieves!

Mrs Heidel. Tit-for-tat, Betsey! you are right, my girl.

Sterl. Zounds! you'll spoil all—you'll raise the whole family——the devil's in the girl.

Mrs Heidel. No, no; the devil's in you, brother; I am ashamed of your principles.——What! would you connive at your daughter's being locked up with her sister's husband? Help! thieves! thieves! I say. [*Cries out.*

Sterl. Sister, I beg you!—daughter, I command you!—If you have no regard for me, consider yourselves!——we shall lose this opportunity of ennobling our blood, and getting above twenty per cent. for our money.

Miss Sterl. What, by my disgrace and my sister's triumph! I have a spirit above such mean considerations; and, to shew you that it is not a low-bred, vulgar 'Change-alley spirit——help! help! thieves! thieves! thieves! I say.

Sterl. Ay, ay, you may save your lungs—the house is in an uproar; women at best have no discretion; but in a passion they'll fire a house, or burn themselves in it, rather than not be revenged.

Enter CANTON, *in a Night-gown and Slippers.*

Can. Eh, diable! vat is de raison of dis great noise, dis tintamarre?

Sterl. Ask those ladies, sir; 'tis of their making.

Lord Og. [*Calls within.*] Brush! Brush!—Canton! where are you?—What's the matter? [*Rings a bell.*] Where are you?

Sterl. 'Tis my lord calls, Mr Canton.

Can. I come, mi lor!—— [*Exit* CANTON.

[*Lord* OGLEBY *still rings.*

Serj. Flow. [*Calls within.*] A light! a light here!—where are the servants? Bring a light for me and my brothers.

Sterl. Lights here! lights for the gentlemen! [*Exit* STERLING.

Mrs Heidel. My brother feels, I see—your sister's turn will come next.

Miss Sterl. Ay, ay, let it go round, madam, it is the only comfort I have left.

Re-enter STERLING, *with lights, before Serjeant* FLOWER, *with one boot and a slipper, and* TRAVERSE.

Sterl. This way, sir! this way, gentlemen!

Flow. Well, but, Mr Sterling, no danger I hope? Have they made a burglarious entry? Are you prepared to repulse them? I am very much alarmed about thieves at circuit-time. They would be particularly severe with us gentlemen of the bar.

Trav. No danger, Mr Sterling,—no trespass, I hope?

Sterl. None, gentlemen, but of those ladies' making.

Mrs Heidel. You'll be ashamed to know, gentlemen, that all your labours and studies about this young lady are thrown away—Sir John Melvil is at this moment locked up with this lady's younger sister.

Flow. The thing is a little extraordinary, to be sure; but, why were we to be frighten'd out of our beds for this? Could not we have tried this cause to-morrow morning?

Miss Sterl. But, sir, by to-morrow morning, perhaps, even your assistance would not have been of any service—the birds now in that cage would have flown away.

Enter Lord OGLEBY, *in his Robe-de-chambre, Night-cap, &c. leaning on* CANTON.

Lord Og. I had rather lose a limb than my night's rest. What's the matter with you all?

Sterl. Ay, ay, 'tis all over!—Here's my lord too.

Lord Og. What's all this shrieking and screaming? Where's my angelic Fanny? She's safe, I hope?

Mrs Heidel. Your angelic Fanny, my lord, is lock'd up with your angelic nephew in that chamber.

Lord Og. My nephew! then will I be excommunicated.

Mrs Heidel. Your nephew, my lord, has been plotting to run away with the younger sister; and the younger sister has been plotting to run away with your nephew: and if we had not watched them, and call'd up the fammaly, they had been upon the scamper to Scotland by this time.

Lord Og. Look'e, ladies! I know that Sir John has conceived a violent passion for Miss Fanny; and I know too that Miss Fanny has conceived a violent passion for another person; and I am so well convinced of the rectitude of her affections, that I will support them with my fortune, my honour, and my life.——Eh, sha'n't I, Mr Sterling? [*Smiling.*] what say you?

Sterl. [*Sulkily.*] To be sure, my lord.—— These bawling women have been the ruin of every thing. [*Aside.*

Lord Og. But come, I'll end this business in a trice—if you, ladies, will compose yourselves, and Mr Sterling will ensure Miss Fanny from violence, I will engage to draw her from her pillow with a whisper through the key-hole.

Mrs Heidel. The horrid creatures!—I say, my lord, break the door open.

Lord Og. Let me beg of your delicacy not to be too precipitate! Now to our experiment! [*Advancing towards the door.*

Miss Sterl. Now, what will they do?—my heart will beat through my bosom.

Enter BETTY *with the key.*

Bet. There's no occasion for breaking open doors, my lord; we have done nothing that we ought to be ashamed of, and my mistress shall face her enemies. [*Going to unlock the door.*

Mrs Heidel. There's impudence!

Lord Og. The mystery thickens. Lady of the bedchamber, [*To* Betty.] open the door, and entreat Sir John Melvil (for the ladies will have it that he is there) to appear, and answer to high crimes and misdemeanors.—Call Sir John Melvil into the court!

Enter Sir John Melvil *on the other Side.*

Sir John. I am here, my lord.

Mrs Heidel. Hey-day!

Miss Sterl. Astonishment!

Sir John. What's all this alarm and confusion? there is nothing but hurry in the house; what is the reason of it?

Lord Og. Because you have been in that chamber: have been! nay, you are at this moment, as these ladies have protested, so don't deny it—

Trav. This is the clearest alibi I ever knew, Mr Serjeant.

Flow. Luce clarius.

Lord Og. Upon my word, ladies, if you have often these frolics, it would be really entertaining to pass a whole summer with you. But come [*To* Betty.] open the door, and entreat your amiable mistress to come forth, and dispel all our doubts with her smiles.

Bet. [*Opening the door.*] Madam, you are wanted in this room. [*Pertly.*

Enter Fanny, *in great confusion.*

Miss Sterl. You see she's ready dressed—and what confusion she's in!

Mrs Heidel. Ready to pack off, bag and baggage! her guilt confounds her!

Flow. Silence in the court, ladies!

Fan. I am confounded, indeed, madam!

Lord Og. Don't droop, my beauteous lily! but, with your own peculiar modesty, declare your state of mind.—Pour conviction into their ears and raptures into mine. [*Smiling.*

Fan. I am at this moment the most unhappy —most distressed—the tumult is too much for my heart—and I want the power to reveal a secret, which to conceal has been the misfortune and misery of my— [*Faints away.*

Lord Og. She faints; help, help! for the fairest and best of women!

Bet. [*Running to her.*] O, my dear mistress! —help, help, there!——

Sir John. Ha! let me fly to her assistance.

Lovewell *rushes out of the Chamber.*

Lov. My Fanny in danger! I can contain no longer.—Prudence were now a crime; all other cares were lost in this!—speak, speak, speak to me, my dearest Fanny!—let me but hear thy voice, open your eyes, and bless me with the smallest sign of life!

[*During this speech they are all in amazement.*

Miss Sterl. Lovewell!——I am easy.——

Mrs Heidel. I am thunderstruck!

Lord Og. I am petrified!

Sir John. And I undone!

Fan. [*Recovering.*] O, Lovewell!—even supported by thee, I dare not look my father nor his lordship in the face.

Sterl. What now! did not I send you to London, sir?

Lord Og. Eh!—What! How's this? by what right and title have you been half the night in that lady's bed-chamber?

Lov. By that right which makes me the happiest of men; and by a title which I would not forego for any the best of kings could give.

Bet. I could cry my eyes out to hear his magnimity.

Lord Og. I am annihilated!

Sterl. I have been choked with rage and wonder; but now I can speak.—Zounds, what have you to say to me? Lovewell, you are a villain. ——You have broke your word with me.

Fan. Indeed, sir, he has not—you forbad him to think of me when it was out of his power to obey you; we have been married these four months.

Sterl And he sha'n't stay in my house four hours. What baseness and treachery! As for you, you shall repent this step as long as you live, madam.

Fan. Indeed, sir, it is impossible to conceive the tortures I have already endured in consequence of my disobedience. My heart has continually upbraided me for it; and, though I was too weak to struggle with affection, I feel that I must be miserable for ever without your forgiveness.

Sterl. Lovewell you shall leave my house directly; and you shall follow him, madam.

Lord Og. And if they do, I will receive them into mine. Look ye, Mr Sterling, there have been some mistakes, which we had all better forget for our own sakes; and the best way to forget them is to forgive the cause of them; which I do from my soul.—Poor girl! I swore to support her affection with my life and fortune;—'tis a debt of honour, and must be paid—you swore as much too, Mr Sterling; but your laws in the city will excuse you, I suppose; for you never strike a balance without errors excepted.

Sterl. I am a father, my lord; but, for the sake of all fathers, I think I ought not to forgive her, for fear of encouraging other silly girls like herself to throw themselves away without the consent of their parents.

Lov. I hope there will be no danger of that, sir. Young ladies, with minds like my Fanny's, would startle at the very shadow of vice; and when they know to what uneasiness only an indiscretion has exposed her, her example, instead of encouraging, will rather serve to deter them.

Mrs Heidel. Indiscretion, quoth-a! a mighty pretty delicate word to express disobedience!

Lord Og. For my part, I indulge my own passions too much to tyrannize over those of other people. Poor souls, I pity them. And you must forgive them too Come, come, melt a little of your flint, Mr Sterling!

Sterl. Why, why, as to that, my lord—to be sure he is a relation of yours, my lord——what say you, sister Heidelberg?

Mrs Heidel. The girl's ruin'd, and I forgive her.

Sterl. Well—so do I then.—Nay, no thanks—[*To* LOVEWELL *and* FANNY, *who seem preparing to speak.*] there's an end of the matter.

Lord Og. But, Lovewell, what makes you dumb all this while?

Love. Your kindness, my lord——I can scarce believe my own senses—they are all in a tumult of fear, joy, love, expectation, and gratitude; I ever was, and am now more bound in duty to your lordship. For you, Mr Sterling, if every moment of my life, spent gratefully in your service, will in some measure compensate the want of fortune, you perhaps will not repent your goodness to me. And you, ladies, I flatter myself, will not for the future suspect me of artifice and intrigue—I shall be happy to oblige and serve you. —As for you, Sir John————

Sir John. No apologies to me, Lovewell, I do not deserve any. All I have to offer in excuse for what has happened, is my total ignorance of your situation. Had you dealt a little more openly with me, you would have saved me, and yourself, and that lady, (who, I hope, will pardon my behaviour) a great deal of uneasiness. Give me leave, however, to assure you, that light and capricious as I may have appeared, now my infatuation is over, I have sensibility enough to be ashamed of the part I have acted, and honour enough to rejoice at your happiness.

Lov. And now, my dearest Fanny, though we are seemingly the happiest of beings, yet all our joys will be dampt, if his lordship's generosity, and Mr Sterling's forgiveness, should not be succeeded by the indulgence, approbation, and consent of these our best benefactors.

[*To the audience.* *Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY MR GARRICK.

CHARACTERS OF THE EPILOGUE.

MEN.

Lord MINUM.
Colonel TRILL.
Sir PATRICK MAHONY.

WOMEN.

Miss CROTCHET.
Mrs QUAVER,
First Lady.
Second Lady.
Third Lady.

SCENE,—*An Assembly.*

Several Persons at Cards, at different Tables; among the rest, Colonel TRILL, *Lord* MINUM, *Mrs* QUAVER, *Sir* PATRICK MAHONY.

At the Quadrille Table.

Col. T. Ladies, with leave——
2d Lady. Pass!
3d Lady. Pass!
Mrs Qu. You must do more.
Col. T. Indeed I cann't.
Mrs Qu. I play in hearts.
Col. T. Encore!
2d Lady. What luck!
Col. T. To-night at Drury-Lane is play'd
A Comedy, and *tout nouvelle*—a spade!
Is not Miss Crotchet at the play?
Mrs Qu. My niece
Has made a party, sir, to damn the piece.

At the Whist Table.

Ld Min. I hate a playhouse—Trump—It makes me sick.
1st Lady. We're two by honours, ma'am.
Ld. Min. And we the odd trick. Pray, do you know the author, Colonel Trill?
Col. T. I know no poets, heaven be praised!—Spadille—
1st. Lady. I'll tell you who, my lord.
[*Whispers Ld.* MIN.
Ld. Min. What, he again?
'And dwell such daring souls in little men?'
Be whose it will, they down our throats will cram it.
Col. T. O, no—I have a Club—the best——We'll damn it.
Mrs Qu. O, bravo, colonel!—Music is my flame.
Ld. Min. And mine, by Jupiter! We've won the game.

Col. T. What, do you love all music?
Mrs Qu. No, not Handel's.
And nasty plays——
Ld. Min. Are fit for Goths and Vandals.
[*Rise from the table and pay.*

From the Piquette Table.

Sir Pat. Well, faith and troth, that Shakespear was no fool!
Col. T. I'm glad you like him, sir——so ends the pool.
[*They pay, and rise from the Table.*

SONG, by the Colonel.

I hate all their nonsense,
Their Shakespears and Jonsons,
Their plays, and their playhouse, and bards:
'Tis singing, not saying;
A fig for all playing,
But playing, as we do, at cards.

I love to see Jonas,
And pleased too with Comus;
Each well the spectator rewards.
So clever, so neat in
Their tricks and their cheating!
Like them, we would fain deal our cards.

Sir Pat. King Lare is touching!—And how fine to see
Ould Hamlet's Ghost?—'To be, or not to be.'——
What are your op'ras to Othello's roar?
Oh, he's an angel of a Blackamoor!
Ld. Min. What, when he choaks his wife!——
Col. T. And calls her whore?
Sir Pat. King Richard calls his horse—And then Macbeth,
Whene'er he murders—takes away the breath.
My blood runs cold at every syllable,
To see the dagger that's invisible. [*All laugh.*
Laugh if you please—a pretty play——
Ld. Min. Is pretty.
Sir Pat. And when there's wit in't——
Col. T. To be sure 'tis witty.
Sir Pat. I love the playhouse now—so light and gay,
With all those candles—they have ta'en away!
[*All laugh.*
For all your game, what makes it so much brighter?
Col. T. Put out the lights, and then——
Ld. Min. 'Tis so much lighter.
Sir Pat. Pray, do you mane, sirs, more than you express?
Col. T. Just as it happens——
Ld. Min. Either more or less.
Mrs Qu. An't you ashamed, sir? [*To Sir* Pat.
Sir Pat. Me!—I seldom blush:—
For little Shakespear, faith, I'd take a push.
Ld. Min. News! news!—Here comes Miss Crotchet from the play.

Enter Miss Crotchet.

Mrs Qu. Well, Crotchet, what's the news?
Miss Cro. We've lost the day.
Col. T. Tell us, dear miss, all you have heard and seen.
Miss Cro. I'm tired—a chair—here, take my capuchin.
Ld. Min. And isn't it damn'd, miss?
Miss Cro. No, my lord, not quite.
But we shall damn it.
Col. T. When?
Miss Cro. To-morrow night.
There is a party of us, all of fashion,
Resolved to exterminate this vulgar passion:
A playhouse! what a place!—I must forswear it;
A little mischief only makes one bear it.
Such crowds of city folks!—so rude and pressing!
And their horse laughs, so hideously distressing!
Whene'er we hiss'd, they frown'd, and fell a swearing,
Like their own Guildhall giants—fierce and staring!
Col. T. What said the folks of fashion; were they cross?
Ld. Min. The rest have no more judgment than my horse.
Miss Cro. Lord Grimly said, 'twas execrable stuff.
Says one—Why so, my lord?—My lord took snuff.
In the first act Lord George began to doze,
And criticised the author through his nose;
So loud indeed, that as his lordship snored,
The pit turn'd round, and all the brutes encored.
Some lords, indeed, approved the author's jokes.
Ld. Min. We have among us, miss, some foolish folks.
Miss Cro. Says poor Lord Simper—Well, now to my mind,
The piece is good;—but he's both deaf and blind.
Sir Pat. Upon my soul, a very pretty story!
And quality appears in all its glory.
There was some merit in the piece, no doubt?
Miss Cro. O to be sure!—if one could find it out.
Col. T. But tell us, miss, the subject of the play.
Miss Cro. Why 'twas a marriage—yes—a marriage—stay——
A lord, an aunt, two sisters, and a merchant——
A baronet, ten lawyers, a fat serjeant,
Are all produced—to talk with one another;
And about something make a mighty pother!
They all go in and out, and to and fro,
And talk and quarrel—as they come and go——
Then go to bed—and then get up—and then—
Scream, faint, scold, kiss—and go to bed again.—— [*All laugh.*
Such is the play—Your judgment—never sham it:—
Col. T. Oh, damn it!
Mrs Qu. Damn it!
1st Lady. Damn it!
Miss Cro. Damn it!
Ld. Min. Damn it!

Sir Pat. Well, faith, you speak your minds, and I'll be free—
Good night—this company's too good for me. [*Going.*

Col. T. Your judgment, dear Sir Patrick, makes us proud. [*All laugh.*

Sir Pat. Laugh, if you please, but, pray, don't laugh so loud. [*Exit.*

RECITATIVE.

Col. T. Now the barbarian's gone, miss, tune your tongue,
And let us raise our spirits high with song.

RECITATIVE.

Miss Cro. Colonel, *de tout mon cœur*—I've one in *petto*,
Which you shall join, and make it a *duetto.*

RECITATIVE.

Ld. Min. Bella Signora, et amico mio, I too will join, and then we'll make a *trio.*

Col. T. Come all, and join the full-mouth'd chorus;
And drive all tragedy and comedy before us.

All the Company rise, and advance to the front of the Stage.

AIR.

Col. T. Would you ever go to see a tragedy?
Miss Cro. Never, never.
Col. T. A comedy?
Ld. Min. Never, never.
Live for ever,
Tweedle-dum, and tweedle-dee!
Col. T. Ld. Min. and Miss Cro. Live for ever,
Tweedle-dum, and tweedle-dee!

CHORUS.

Would you ever go to see, &c.

THE

GOOD-NATURED MAN.

BY

GOLDSMITH.

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY DR JOHNSON.

SPOKEN BY MR BENSLEY.

PREST by the load of life, the weary mind
Surveys the general toil of human kind;
With cool submission joins the labouring train,
And social sorrow loses half its pain:
Our anxious Bard, without complaint, may share
This bustling season's epidemic care.
Like Cæsar's pilot, dignify'd by fate,
Tost in one common storm with all the great;
Distrest alike, the statesman and the wit,
When one a borough courts, and one the pit.
The busy candidates for power and fame,
Have hopes, and fears, and wishes, just the same;
Disabled both to combat, or to fly,
Must hear all taunts, and hear without reply.
Uncheck'd on both, loud rabbles vent their rage,
As mongrels bay the lion in a cage.
Th' offended burgess hoards his angry tale,
For that blest year when all that vote may rail;
Their schemes of spite the poet's foes dismiss,
Till that glad night, when all that hate may hiss.
This day the powder'd curls and golden coat,
Says swelling Crispin, begg'd a cobler's vote.
This night, our wit, the pert apprentice cries,
Lies at my feet, I hiss him, and he dies.
The great, 'tis true, can charm th' electing tribe;
The bard may supplicate, but cannot bribe.
Yet judged by those, whose voices ne'er were sold,
He feels no want of all-persuading gold;
But confident of praise, if praise be due,
Trusts without fear, to merit, and to you.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Mr HONEYWOOD.
CROAKER.
LOFTY.
Sir WILLIAM HONEYWOOD.
LEONTINE.
JARVIS.
Butler.
Bailiff.
DUBARDIEU.
Postboy.

WOMEN.

Miss RICHLAND.
OLIVIA.
Mrs CROAKER.
GARNET.
Landlady.

SCENE,—*London.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in Young* HONEYWOOD'S *House.*

Enter Sir WILLIAM HONEYWOOD *and* JARVIS.

Sir Wil. Good Jarvis, make no apologies for this honest bluntness. Fidelity, like yours, is the best excuse for every freedom.

Jar. I cann't help being blunt, and being very angry too, when I hear you talk of disinheriting so good, so worthy a young gentleman as your nephew, my master. All the world loves him.

Sir Wil. Say rather, that he loves all the world; that is his fault.

Jar. I'm sure there is no part of it more dear to him than you are, though he has not seen you since he was a child.

Sir Wil. What signifies his affection to me, or how can I be proud of a place in a heart where every sharper and coxcomb find an easy entrance?

Jar. I grant you that he's rather too good-natured; that he's too much every man's man; that he laughs this minute with one, and cries the next with another; but whose instructions may he thank for all this?

Sir Wil. Not mine, sure. My letters to him during my employment in Italy, taught him only that philosophy which might prevent, not defend, his errors.

Jar. Faith, begging your honour's pardon, I'm sorry they taught him any philosophy at all; it has only served to spoil him. This same philosophy is a good horse in the stable, but an arrant jade on a journey. For my own part, whenever I hear him mention the name on't, I'm always sure he's going to play the fool.

Sir Wil. Don't let us ascribe his faults to his philosophy, I entreat you. No, Jarvis, his good nature arises rather from his fears of offending the importunate, than his desire of making the deserving happy.

Jar. What it arises from, I don't know. But, to be sure, every body has it that asks it.

Sir Wil. Ay, or that does not ask it. I have been now for some time a concealed spectator of his follies, and find them as boundless as his dissipation.

Jar. And yet, faith, he has some fine name or other for them all. He calls his extravagance, generosity; and his trusting every body, universal benevolence. It was but last week he went security for a fellow whose face he scarce knew, and that he called an act of exalted mu—mu—munificence; ay, that was the name he gave it.

Sir Wil. And upon that I proceed, as my last effort, though with very little hopes to reclaim him. That very fellow has just absconded, and I have taken up the security. Now, my intention is to involve him in fictitious distress, before he has plunged himself into real calamity. To arrest him for that very debt, to clap an officer upon him, and then let him see which of his friends will come to his relief.

Jar. Well, if I could but any way see him thoroughly vexed, every groan of his would be music to me; yet faith, I believe it impossible. I have tried to fret him myself every morning these three years; but, instead of being angry, he sits as calmly to hear me scold as he does to his hair-dresser.

Sir Wil. We must try him once more, however, and I'll go this instant to put my scheme into execution; and I don't despair of succeeding, as, by your means, I can have frequent opportunities of being about him, without being known. What a pity it is, Jarvis, that any man's good-will to others should produce so much neglect of himself, as to require correction! Yet we must touch his weaknesses with a delicate hand. There are some faults so nearly allied to excellence, that we can scarce weed out the vice without eradicating the virtue. [*Exit.*

Jar. Well, go thy ways, Sir William Honeywood. It is not without reason that the world allows thee to be the best of men. But here comes his hopeful nephew; the strange good-natured, foolish, open-hearted—And yet, all his faults are such, that one loves him still the better for them.

Enter HONEYWOOD.

Hon. Well, Jarvis, what messages from my friends this morning?

Jar. You have no friends.

Hon. Well; from my acquaintance then?

Jar. [*Pulling out bills.*] A few of our usual cards of compliment, that's all. This bill from your tailor; this from your mercer; and this from the little broker in Crooked-lane. He says he has been at a great deal of trouble to get back the money you borrowed.

Hon. That I don't know; but I'm sure we were at a great deal of trouble in getting him to lend it.

Jar. He has lost all patience.

Hon. Then he has lost a very good thing.

Jar. There's that ten guineas you were sending to the poor gentleman and his children in the Fleet. I believe that would stop his mouth, for a while at least.

Hon. Ay, Jarvis, but what will fill their mouths

in the mean time? Must I be cruel because he happens to be importunate; and, to relieve his avarice, leave them to insupportable distress?

Jar. 'Sdeath, sir! the question now is how to relieve yourself—yourself. Haven't I reason to be out of my senses, when I see things going at sixes and sevens?

Hon. Whatever reason you may have for being out of your senses, I hope you'll allow that I'm not quite unreasonable for continuing in mine.

Jar. You're the only man alive in your present situation that could do so—Every thing upon the waste. There's Miss Richland and her fine fortune gone already, and upon the point of being given to your rival.

Hon. I'm no man's rival.

Jar. Your uncle in Italy preparing to disinherit you; your own fortune almost spent; and nothing but pressing creditors, false friends, and a pack of drunken servants, that your kindness has made unfit for any other family.

Hon. Then they have the more occasion for being in mine.

Jar. Soh! What will you have done with him that I caught stealing your plate in the pantry? In the fact, I caught him in the fact.

Hon. In the fact! if so, I really think that we should pay him his wages, and turn him off.

Jar. He shall be turn'd off at Tyburn, the dog; we'll hang him, if it be only to frighten the rest of the family.

Hon. No, Jarvis: it's enough that we have lost what he has stolen; let us not add to it the loss of a fellow-creature!

Jar. Very fine; well, here was the footman just now, to complain of the butler; he says he does most work, and ought to have most wages.

Hon. That's but just; though perhaps here comes the butler to complain of the footman.

Jar. Ay, it's the way with them all, from the scullion to the privy-counsellor. If they have a bad master, they keep quarrelling with him; if they have a good master, they keep quarrelling with one another.

Enter Butler, drunk.

But. Sir, I'll not stay in the family with Jonathan; you must part with him, or part with me, that's the ex—ex—exposition of the matter, sir.

Hon. Full and explicit enough.——But what's his fault, good Philip?

But. Sir, he's given to drinking, sir, and I shall have my morals corrupted, by keeping such company.

Hon. Ha, ha! he has such a diverting way—

Jar. O, quite amusing.

But. I find my wines a-going, sir; and liquors don't go without mouths, sir; I hate a drunkard, sir.

Hon. Well, well, Philip, I'll hear you upon that another time, so go to bed now.

Jar. To bed! let him go to the devil.

But. Begging your honour's pardon, and begging your pardon, master Jarvis, I'll not go to bed, nor to the devil neither. I have enough to do to mind my cellar.—I forgot, your honour, Mr Croaker is below. I came on purpose to tell you.

Hon. Why didn't you shew him up, blockhead?

But. Shew him up, sir? With all my heart, sir. Up or down, all's one to me. [*Exit.*

Jar. Ay, we have one or other of that family in this house from morning till night. He comes on the old affair, I suppose. The match between his son, that's just returned from Paris, and Miss Richland, the young lady he's guardian to.

Hon. Perhaps so. Mr Croaker, knowing my friendship for the young lady, has got it into his head, that I can persuade her to what I please.

Jar. Ah! if you loved yourself but half as well as she loves you, we should soon see a marriage that would set all things to rights again.

Hon. Love me! Sure, Jarvis, you dream. No, no; her intimacy with me never amounted to more than friendship—mere friendship. That she is the most lovely woman that ever warm'd the human heart with desire, I own; but never let me harbour a thought of making her unhappy, by a connection with one so unworthy her merits as I am. No, Jarvis, it shall be my study to serve her, even in spite of my wishes; and to secure her happiness, though it destroys my own.

Jar. Was ever the like! I want patience.

Hon. Besides, Jarvis, though I could obtain Miss Richland's consent, do you think I could succeed with her guardian, or Mrs Croaker his wife; who, though both very fine in their way, are yet a little opposite in their dispositions, you know?

Jar. Opposite enough, Heaven knows; the very reverse of each other; she all laugh and no joke; he always complaining, and never sorrowful; a fretful poor soul, that has a new distress for every hour in the four and twenty——

Hon. Hush, hush, he's coming up, he'll hear you.

Jar. One whose voice is a passing-bell——

Hon. Well, well, go, do.

Jar. A raven that bodes nothing but mischief; a coffin and cross bones; a bundle of rue; a sprig of deadly night shade; a—[HONEYWOOD *stopping his mouth, at last pushes him off.* [*Exit* JARVIS.

Hon. I must own my old monitor is not entirely wrong. There is something in my friend Croaker's conversation that quite depresses me. His very mirth is an antidote to all gaiety, and his appearance has a stronger effect on my spirits than an undertaker's shop.———Mr Croaker, this is such a satisfaction——

Enter CROAKER.

Cro. A pleasant morning to Mr Honeywood, and many of them.——How is this?——You look most shockingly to day, my dear friend. I hope this weather does not affect your spirits. To be sure, if this weather continues——I say nothing ——But God send we be all better this day three months.

Hon. I heartily concur in the wish, though I own not in your apprehensions.

Cro. May be not! Indeed what signifies what weather we have in a country going to ruin, like

ours? Taxes rising, and trade falling. Money flying out of the kingdom, and Jesuits swarming into it. I know at this time no less than an hundred and twenty-seven Jesuits between Charing-Cross and Temple-Bar.

Hon. The Jesuits will scarce pervert you or me, I should hope.

Cro. May be not. Indeed, what signifies whom they pervert in a country that has scarce any religion to lose! I am only afraid for our wives and daughters.

Hon. I have no apprehensions for the ladies, I assure you.

Cro. May be not. Indeed, what signifies whether they be perverted or no! The women in my time were good for something. I have seen a lady drest from top to toe in her own manufactures formerly; but now-a-days, the devil a thing of their own manufacture's about them, except their faces.

Hon. But, however these faults may be practised abroad, you don't find them at home, either with Mrs Croaker, Olivia, or Miss Richland.

Cro. The best of them will never be canoniz'd for a saint when she's dead.——By the bye, my dear friend, I don't find this match between Miss Richland and my son much relish'd, either by one side or t'other.

Hon. I thought otherwise.

Cro. Ah, Mr Honeywood, a little of your fine serious advice to the young lady might go far: I know she has a very exalted opinion of your understanding.

Hon. But would not that be usurping an authority that more properly belongs to yourself?

Cro. My dear friend, you know but little of my authority at home. People think, indeed, because they see me come out in a morning thus, with a pleasant face, and to make my friends merry, that all's well within. But I have cares that would break a heart of stone. My wife has so encroach'd upon every one of my privileges, that I am now no more than a mere lodger in my own house.

Hon. But a little spirit exerted on your side might perhaps restore your authority.

Cro. No, though I had the spirit of a lion! I do rouse sometimes. But what then? Always haggling, haggling; a man is tired of getting the better before his wife is tired of losing the victory.

Hon. It's a melancholy consideration indeed, that our chief comforts often produce our greatest anxieties, and that an increase of our possessions is but an inlet to new disquietudes.

Cro. Ah, my dear friend, these were the very words of poor Dick Doleful to me not a week before he made away with himself.——Indeed, Mr Honeywood, I never see you but you put me in mind of poor Dick. Ah, there was merit neglected for you! and so true a friend; we loved each other for thirty years, and yet he never asked me to lend him a single farthing.

Hon. Pray what could induce him to commit so rash an action at last?

Cro. I don't know; some people were malicious enough to say it was keeping company with me; because we used to meet now and then and open our hearts to each other. To be sure I loved to hear him talk, and he loved to hear me talk; poor dear Dick. He used to say that Croaker rhimed to joker; and so we used to laugh—Poor Dick! [*Going to cry.*

Hon. His fate affects me.

Cro. Ay, he grew sick of this miserable life, where we do nothing but eat and grow hungry, dress and undress, get up and lie down; while reason, that should watch like a nurse by our side, falls as fast asleep as we do.

Hon. To say truth, if we compare that part of life which is to come, by that which we have past, the prospect is hideous.

Cro. Life at the greatest and best is but a froward child, that must be humour'd and coax'd a little till it falls asleep, and then all the care is over.

Hon. Very true, sir, nothing can exceed the vanity of our existence, but the folly of our pursuits. We wept when we came into the world, and every day tells us why.

Cro. Ah, my dear friend, it is a perfect satisfaction to be miserable with you. My son Leontine sha'n't lose the benefit of such fine conversation. I'll just step home for him. I am willing to shew him so much seriousness in one scarce older than himself——And what if I bring my last letter to the Gazetteer on the increase and progress of earthquakes? It will amuse us, I promise you. I there prove how the late earthquake is coming round to pay us another visit from London to Lisbon, from Lisbon to the Canary Islands, from the Canary Islands to Palmyra, from Palmyra to Constantinople, and so from Constantinople back to London again. [*Exit.*

Hon. Poor Croaker! His situation deserves the utmost pity. I shall scarce recover my spirits these three days. Sure, to live upon such terms is worse than death itself. And yet, when I consider my own situation, a broken fortune, an hopeless passion, friends in distress; the wish but not the power to serve them——— [*Pausing and sighing.*

Enter Butler.

But. More company below, sir; Mrs Croaker and Miss Richland; shall I shew them up? But they're shewing up themselves. [*Exit.*

Enter Mrs CROAKER *and Miss* RICHLAND.

Miss Rich. You're always in such spirits.

Mrs Cro. We have just come, my dear Honeywood, from the auction.——There was the old deaf dowager, as usual, bidding like a fury against herself.——And then so curious in antiques! herself the most genuine piece of antiquity in the whole collection.

Hon. Excuse me, ladies, if some uneasiness from friendship makes me unfit to share in this good humour: I know you'll pardon me.

Mrs Cro. I vow he seems as melancholy as if he had taken a dose of my husband this morning. Well, if Richland here can pardon you, I must.

Miss Rich. You would seem to insinuate, madam, that I have particular reasons for being disposed to refuse it?

Mrs Cro. Whatever I insinuate, my dear, don't be so ready to wish an explanation.

Miss Rich. I own I should be sorry, Mr Honeywood's long friendship and mine should be misunderstood.

Hon. There's no answering for others, madam; but I hope you'll never find me presuming to offer more than the most delicate friendship may readily allow.

Miss Rich. And I shall be prouder of such a tribute from you than the most passionate professions from others.

Hon. My own sentiments, madam: friendship is a disinterested commerce between equals; love, an abject intercourse between tyrants and slaves.

Miss Rich. And, without a compliment, I know none more disinterested, or more capable of friendship, than Mr Honeywood.

Mrs Cro. And indeed I know nobody that has more friends, at least among the ladies. Miss Fruzz, Miss Odbody, and Miss Winterbottom, praise him in all companies. As for Miss Biddy Bundle, she's his professed admirer.

Miss Rich. Indeed! an admirer! I did not know, sir, you were such a favourite there. But is she seriously so handsome? Is she the mighty thing talk'd of?

Hon. The town, madam, seldom begins to praise a lady's beauty till she's beginning to lose it. [*Smiling.*

Mrs Cro. But she's resolved never to lose it, it seems. For, as her natural face decays, her skill improves in making the artificial one. Well, nothing diverts me more than one of those fine old dressy things, who thinks to conceal her age, by every where exposing her person; sticking herself up in the front of a side-box; trailing through a minuet at Almack's; and then, in the public gardens, looking for all the world like one of the painted ruins of the place.

Hon. Every age has its admirers, ladies. While you, perhaps, are trading among the warmer climates of youth, there ought to be some to carry on an useful commerce in the frozen latitudes beyond fifty.

Miss Rich. But then the mortifications they must suffer before they can be fitted out for traffic. I have seen one of them fret a whole morning at her hair-dresser, when all the fault was her face.

Hon. And yet, I'll engage, has carried that face at last to a very good market. This good-natured town, madam, has husbands, like spectacles, to fit every age, from fifteen to fourscore.

Mrs Cro. Well, you're a dear good-natured creature. But you know you're engaged with us this morning upon a strolling party. I want to shew Olivia the town, and the things; I believe I shall have business for you for the whole day.

Hon. I am sorry, madam, I have an appointment with Mr Croaker, which it is impossible to put off.

Mrs Cro. What! with my husband! Then I'm resolved to take no refusal. Nay, I protest you must. You know I never laugh so much as with you.

Hon. Why, if I must, I must. I'll swear you have put me into such spirits. Well, do you find jest, and I'll find laugh, I promise you. We'll wait for the chariot in the next room. [*Exeunt*

Enter LEONTINE *and* OLIVIA.

Leo. There they go, thoughtless and happy: my dearest Olivia, what would I give to see you capable of sharing in their amusements, and as cheerful as they are.

Oliv. How, my Leontine, how can I be cheerful, when I have so many terrors to oppress me? The fear of being detected by this family, and the apprehensions of a censuring world when I must be detected——

Leo. The world! my love, what can it say? At worst it can only say that, being compelled by a mercenary guardian to embrace a life you disliked, you formed a resolution of flying with the man of your choice; that you confided in his honour, and took refuge in my father's house; the only one where yours could remain without censure.

Oliv. But consider, Leontine, your disobedience and my indiscretion: your being sent to France to bring home a sister; and, instead of a sister, bringing home——

Leo. One dearer than a thousand sisters. One that I am convinced will be equally dear to the rest of the family, when she comes to be known.

Oliv. And that, I fear, will shortly be.

Leo. Impossible, till we ourselves think proper to make the discovery. My sister, you know, has been with her aunt, at Lyons, since she was a child, and you find every creature in the family takes you for her.

Oliv. But mayn't she write, mayn't her aunt write?

Leo. Her aunt scarce ever writes, and all my sister's letters are directed to me.

Oliv. But won't your refusing Miss Richland, for whom you know the old gentleman intends you, create a suspicion?

Leo. There, there's my master-stroke. I have resolved not to refuse her; nay, an hour hence I have consented to go with my father to make her an offer of my heart and fortune.

Oliv. Your heart and fortune!

Leo. Don't be alarm'd, my dearest. Can Olivia think so meanly of my honour, or my love, as to suppose I could ever hope for happiness from any but her? No, my Olivia, neither the force, nor, permit me to add, the delicacy of my passion, leave any room to suspect me. I only offer Miss Richland an heart, I am convinced she will refuse; as I am confident that, without knowing it, her affections are fixed upon Mr Honeywood.

Oliv. Mr Honeywood! You'll excuse my apprehensions; but, when your merits come to be put in the balance——

Leo. You view them with too much partiality. However, by making this offer, I shew a seeming compliance with my father's commands; and per-

haps, upon her refusal, I may have his consent to choose for myself.

Oliv. Well, I submit. And yet, my Leontine, I own I shall envy her even your pretended addresses. I consider every look, every expression of your esteem, as due only to me. This is folly, perhaps: I allow it: but it is natural to suppose that merit, which has made an impression on one's own heart, may be powerful over that of another.

Leo. Don't, my life's treasure, don't let us make imaginary evils, when you know we have so many real ones to encounter. At worst, you know, if Miss Richland should consent, or my father refuse his pardon, it can but end in a trip to Scotland; and——

Enter CROAKER.

Cro. Where have you been, boy? I have been seeking you. My friend Honeywood here has been saying such comfortable things. Ah! he's an example indeed. Where is he? I left him here.

Leo. Sir, I believe you may see him, and hear him too, in the next room: he's preparing to go out with the ladies.

Cro. Good gracious, can I believe my eyes or my ears! I'm struck dumb with his vivacity, and stunn'd with the loudness of his laugh. Was there ever such a transformation! [*A laugh behind the scenes,* CROAKER *mimicks it.*] Ha, ha, ha! there it goes: a plague take their balderdash; yet I could expect nothing less, when my precious wife was of the party. On my conscience, I believe she could spread an horse-laugh through the pews of a tabernacle.

Leo. Since you find so many objections to a wife, sir, how can you be so earnest in recommending one to me?

Cro. I have told you, and tell you again, boy, that Miss Richland's fortune must not go out of the family; one may find comfort in the money, whatever one does in the wife.

Leo. But, sir, though, in obedience to your desire, I am ready to marry her, it may be possible she has no inclination to me.

Cro. I'll tell you once for all how it stands. A good part of Miss Richland's large fortune consists in a claim upon government, which my good friend, Mr Lofty, assures me the treasury will allow. One half of this she is to forfeit, by her father's will, in case she refuses to marry you. So, if she rejects you, we seize half her fortune; if she accepts you, we seize the whole, and a fine girl into the bargain.

Leo. But, sir, if you will but listen to reason——

Cro. Come, then, produce your reasons. I tell you I'm fix'd, determined, so now produce your reasons. When I'm determined, I always listen to reason, because it can then do no harm.

Leo. You have alledged, that a mutual choice was the first requisite in matrimonial happiness.

Cro. Well, and you have both of you a mutual choice. She has her choice—to marry you, or lose half her fortune; and you have your choice—to marry her, or pack out of doors without any fortune at all.

Leo. An only son, sir, might expect more indulgence.

Cro. An only father, sir, might expect more obedience; besides, has not your sister here, that never disobliged me in her life, as good a right as you? He's a sad dog, Livy, my dear, and would take all from you. But he sha'n't, I tell you he sha'n't, for you shall have your share.

Oliv. Dear sir, I wish you'd be convinced that I can never be happy in any addition to my fortune which is taken from his.

Cro. Well, well, 'tis a good child, to say no more; but come with me, and we shall see something that will give us a great deal of pleasure, I promise you; old Ruggins, the curry-comb-maker, lying in state; I'm told he makes a very handsome corpse, and becomes his coffin prodigiously. He was an intimate friend of mine, and these are friendly things we ought to do for each other.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—CROAKER'S *House.*

Enter Miss RICHLAND *and* GARNET.

Miss Rich. Olivia not his sister? Olivia not Leontine's sister? You amaze me!

Gar. No more his sister than I am; I had it all from his own servant; I can get any thing from that quarter.

Miss Rich. But how? Tell me again, Garnet.

Gar. Why, madam, as I told you before, instead of going to Lyons to bring home his sister, who has been there with her aunt these ten years, he never went further than Paris; there he saw, and fell in love with, this young lady; by the bye of a prodigious family.

Miss Rich. And brought her home to my guardian as his daughter?

Gar. Yes, and daughter she will be. If he don't consent to their marriage, they talk of trying what a Scotch parson can do.

Miss Rich. Well, I own they have deceived me—And so demurely as Olivia carried it too! —Would you believe it, Garnet, I told her all my secrets; and yet the sly cheat concealed all this from me?

Gar. And, upon my word, madam, I don't much blame her; she was loth to trust one with

her secrets that was so very bad at keeping her own.

Miss Rich. But, to add to their deceit, the young gentleman, it seems, pretends to make me serious proposals. My guardian and he are to be here presently to open the affair in form. You know I am to lose half my fortune if I refuse him.

Gar. Yet, what can you do? For being, as you are, in love with Mr Honeywood, madam——

Miss Rich. How, idiot! what do you mean? In love with Mr Honeywood! Is this to provoke me?

Gar. That is, madam, in friendship with him; I meant nothing more than friendship, as I hope to be married; nothing more.

Miss Rich. Well, no more of this! As to my guardian and his son, they shall find me prepared to receive them; I'm resolved to accept their proposal with seeming pleasure, to mortify them by compliance, and to throw the refusal at last upon them.

Gar. Delicious! and that will secure your whole fortune to yourself. Well, who could have thought so innocent a face could cover so much cuteness!

Miss Rich. Why, girl, I only oppose my prudence to their cunning, and practise a lesson they have taught me against themselves.

Gar. Then you're likely not long to want employment, for here they come, and in close conference.

Enter CROAKER *and* LEONTINE.

Leo. Excuse me, sir, if I seem to hesitate upon the point of putting the lady so important a question.

Cro. Lord! good sir, moderate your fears; you're so plaguy shy, that one would think you had changed sexes. I tell you we must have the half or the whole. Come, let me see with what spirit you begin? Well, why don't you? Eh! What? Well then—I must, it seems—Miss Richland, my dear, I believe you guess at our business; an affair which my son here comes to open, that nearly concerns your happiness.

Miss Rich. Sir, I should be ungrateful not to be pleased with any thing that comes recommended by you.

Cro. How, boy! could you desire a finer opening? Why don't you begin, I say? [*To* LEO.

Leo. 'Tis true, madam; my father, madam, has some intentions—hem—of explaining an affair ——which—himself—can best explain, madam.

Cro. Yes, my dear; it comes entirely from my son; it's all a request of his own, madam; and I will permit him to make the best of it.

Leo. The whole affair is only this, madam; my father has a proposal to make, which he insists none but himself shall deliver.

Cro. My mind misgives me; the fellow will never be brought on. [*Aside.*] In short, madam, you see before you one that loves you; one whose whole happiness is all in you.

Miss Rich. I never had any doubts of your regard, sir; and I hope you can have none of my duty.

Cro. That's not the thing, my little sweeting, my love! No, no, another guess lover than I; there he stands, madam; his very looks declare the force of his passion—Call up a look, you dog —But then, had you seen him, as I have, weeping, speaking soliloquies and blank verse, sometimes melancholy, and sometimes absent—

Miss Rich. I fear, sir, he's absent now; or such a declaration would have come more properly from himself.

Cro. Himself, madam! he would die before he could make such a confession; and if he had not a channel for his passion through me, it would ere now have drowned his understanding.

Miss Rich. I must grant, sir, there are attractions in modest diffidence, above the force of words. A silent address is the genuine eloquence of sincerity.

Cro. Madam, he has forgot to speak any other language; silence is become his mother tongue.

Miss Rich. And, it must be confessed, sir, it speaks very powerfully in his favour. And yet, I shall be thought too forward in making such a confession; sha'n't I, Mr Leontine?

Leo. Confusion! my reserve will undo me. But if modesty attracts her, impudence may disgust her. I'll try. [*Aside.*] Don't imagine from my silence, madam, that I want a due sense of the honour and happiness intended me. My father, madam, tells me, your humble servant is not totally indifferent to you. He admires you; I adore you; and when we come together, upon my soul I believe we shall be the happiest couple in all St James's.

Miss Rich. If I could flatter myself you thought as you speak, sir——

Leo. Doubt my sincerity, madam? By your dear self I swear. Ask the brave if they desire glory; ask cowards if they covet safety——

Cro. Well, well, no more questions about it.

Leo. Ask the sick if they long for health, ask misers if they love money, ask————

Cro. Ask a fool if he can talk nonsense! What's come over the boy? What signifies asking, when there's not a soul to give you an answer? If you would ask to the purpose, ask this lady's consent to make you happy.

Miss Rich. Why, indeed, sir, his uncommon ardour almost compels me, forces me, to comply. And yet I'm afraid he'll despise a conquest gain'd with too much ease; won't you, Mr Leontine?

Leo. Confusion! [*Aside.*] O by no means, madam, by no means. And yet, madam, you talked of force. There is nothing I would avoid so much as compulsion in a thing of this kind. No, madam, I will still be generous, and leave you at liberty to refuse.

Cro. But I tell you, sir, the lady is not at liberty. It's a match. You see she says nothing. Silence gives consent.

Leo. But, sir, she talk'd of force. Consider, sir, the cruelty of constraining her inclinations.

Cro. But I say there's no cruelty. Don't you know, blockhead, that girls have always a round-about way of saying yes before company? So get you both gone together into the next room, and hang him that interrupts the tender explanations. Get you gone, I say; I'll not hear a word.

Leo. But, sir, I must beg leave to insist—

Cro. Get off, you puppy, or I'll beg leave to insist upon knocking you down. Stupid whelp! But I don't wonder; the boy takes entirely after his mother. [*Exeunt Miss* RICH. *and* LEO.

Enter Mrs CROAKER.

Mrs Cro. Mr Croaker, I bring you something, my dear, that I believe will make you smile.

Cro. I'll hold you a guinea of that, my dear.

Mrs Cro. A letter; and, as I knew the hand, I ventured to open it.

Cro. And how can you expect your breaking open my letters should give me pleasure?

Mrs Cro. Poo! it's from your sister at Lyons, and contains good news: read it.

Cro. What a Frenchified cover is here! That sister of mine has some good qualities, but I could never teach her to fold a letter.

Mrs Cro. Fold a fiddlestick. Read what it contains.

Cro. [*Reading.*]

'Dear Nick,

'An English gentleman, of large fortune, has for some time made private, though honourable proposals to your daughter Olivia. They love each other tenderly, and I find she has consented, without letting any of the family know, to crown his addresses. As such good offers don't come every day, your own good sense, his large fortune and family considerations, will induce you to forgive her. 'Yours ever,

'RACHEL CROAKER.'

My daughter Olivia privately contracted to a man of large fortune! This is good news indeed.—My heart never foretold me of this. And yet, how slyly the little baggage has carried it since she came home. Not a word on't to the old ones for the world. Yet, I thought, I saw something she wanted to conceal.

Mrs Cro. Well, if they have concealed their amour, they sha'n't conceal their wedding; that shall be public, I'm resolved.

Cro. I tell thee, woman, the wedding is the most foolish part of the ceremony. I can never get this woman to think of the most serious part of the nuptial engagement.

Mrs Cro. What, would you have me think of their funeral? But come, tell me, my dear, don't you owe more to me than you care to confess? Would you have ever been known to Mr Lofty, who has undertaken Miss Richland's claim at the Treasury, but for me? who was it first made him an acquaintance at Lady Shabbaroon's rout? Who got him to promise us his interest? Is not he a back-stair favourite, one that can do what he pleases with those that do what they please? Isn't he an acquaintance that all your groaning and lamentations could never have got us?

Cro. He is a man of importance, I grant you. And yet, what amazes me is, that, while he is giving away places to all the world, he can't get one for himself.

Mrs Cro. That perhaps may be owing to his nicety. Great men are not easily satisfied.

Enter a French Servant.

Serv. An expresse from Monsieur Lofty. He vil be vait upon your honour's instammant. He be only giving four five instruction, read two tree memorial, call upon von ambassadeur. He vil be vid you in one tree minutes.

Mrs Cro. You see now, my dear, what an extensive department!—Well, friend, let your master know, that we are extremely honoured by this honour.—Was there any thing ever in a higher style of breeding! All messages among the great are now done by express.

Cro. To be sure, no man does little things with more solemnity, or claims more respect, than he. But he's in the right on't. In our bad world, respect is given, where respect is claim'd.

Mrs Cro. Never mind the world, my dear; you were never in a pleasanter place in your life. Let us now think of receiving him with proper respect; [*A loud rapping at the door.*] and there he is by the thundering rap.

Cro. Ay, verily, there he is; as close upon the heels of his own express, as an indorsement upon the back of a bill. Well, I'll leave you to receive him, whilst I go to chide my little Olivia for intending to steal a marriage without mine or her aunt's consent. I must seem to be angry, or she too may begin to despise my authority.

[*Exit.*

Enter LOFTY, *speaking to his Servant.*

Lof. And if the Venetian ambassador, or that teasing creature the marquis, should call, I'm not at home. Dam'me, I'll be pack-horse to none of them. My dear madam, I have just snatched a moment—And if the expresses to his grace be ready, let them be sent off; they're of importance.—Madam, I ask ten thousand pardons.

Mrs Cro. Sir, this honour——

Lof. And, Dubardieu! if the person calls about the commission, let him know that it is made out. As for Lord Cumbercourt's stale request, it can keep cold: you understand me?—Madam, I ask ten thousand pardons.

Mrs Cro. Sir, this honour———

Lof. And, Dubardieu! if the man comes from the Cornish borough, you must do him; you must do him, I say.—Madam, I ask ten thousand pardons.—And if the Russian ambassador calls: but he will scarce call to-day, I believe.—And now, madam, I have just got time to express my happiness in having the honour of being permitted to profess myself your most obedient humble servant.

Mrs Cro. Sir, the happiness and honour are all mine; and yet, I'm only robbing the public while I detain you.

Lof. Sink the public, madam, when the fair are to be attended. Ah, could all my hours be so

charmingly devoted! Sincerely, don't you pity us poor creatures in affairs? Thus it is eternally; solicited for places here, teased for pensions there, and courted every where. I know you pity me. Yes, I see you do.

Mrs Cro. Excuse me, sir. Toils of empires pleasures are, as Waller says.

Lof. Waller, Waller; is he of the house?

Mrs Cro. The modern poet of that name, sir.

Lof. Oh, a modern! We men of business despise the moderns; and as for the ancients, we have no time to read them. Poetry is a pretty thing enough for our wives and daughters; but not for us. Why now, here I stand that know nothing of books. I say, madam, I know nothing of books; and yet, I believe, upon a land-carriage fishery, a stamp act, or a jaghire, I can talk my two hours without feeling the want of them.

Mrs Cro. The world is no stranger to Mr Lofty's eminence in every capacity.

Lof. I vow to Gad, madam, you make me blush. I'm nothing, nothing, nothing in the world; a mere obscure gentleman. To be sure, indeed, one or two of the present ministers are pleased to represent me as a formidable man. I know they are pleased to bespatter me at all their little dirty levees. Yet, upon my soul, I wonder what they see in me to treat me so! Measures, not men, have always been my mark; and I vow by all that's honourable, my resentment has never done the men, as mere men, any manner of harm—That is, as mere men.

Mrs Cro. What importance, and yet what modesty!

Lof. Oh, if you talk of modesty, madam! there, I own, I'm accessible to praise: modesty is my foible. It was so the Duke of Brentford used to say of me. I love Jack Lofty, he used to say: no man a finer knowledge of things; quite a man of information; and when he speaks upon his legs, by the lord he's prodigious—he scouts them; and yet all men have their faults: too much modesty is his, says his grace.

Mrs Cro. And yet, I dare say, you don't want assurance when you come to solicit for your friends.

Lof. O, there indeed I'm in bronze. Apropos, I have just been mentioning Miss Richland's case to a certain personage; we must name no names. When I ask, I am not to be put off, madam. No, no, I take my friend by the button. A fine girl, sir; great justice in her case—A friend of mine—Borough interest.——Business must be done, Mr Secretary. I say, Mr Secretary, her business must be done, sir. That's my way, madam.

Mrs Cro. Bless me! you said all this to the Secretary of State, did you?

Lof. I did not say the secretary, did I? Well, curse it, since you have found me out, I will not deny it. It was to the secretary.

Mrs Cro. This was going to the fountain head at once, not applying to the understrappers, as Mr Honeywood would have had us.

Lof. Honeywood! he, he! He was indeed a fine solicitor. I suppose you have heard what has just happened to him?

Mrs Cro. Poor dear man! no accident, I hope.

Lof. Undone, madam, that's all. His creditors have taken him into custody. A prisoner in his own house.

Mrs Cro. A prisoner in his own house! How! At this very time! I'm quite unhappy for him.

Lof. Why, so am I. The man, to be sure, was immensely good-natured. But then I could never find that he had any thing in him.

Mrs Cro. His manner, to be sure, was excessive harmless; some, indeed, thought it a little dull. For my part, I always concealed my opinion.

Lof. It cann't be concealed, madam; the man was dull, dull as the last new comedy! A poor impracticable creature! I tried once or twice to know if he was fit for business; but he had scarce talents to be groom-porter to an orange barrow.

Mrs Cro. How differently does Miss Richland think of him! for, I believe, with all his faults, she loves him.

Lof. Loves him! Does she? You should cure her of that by all means. Let me see, what if she were sent to him this instant, in his present doleful situation? My life for it that works her cure. Distress is a perfect antidote to love. Suppose we join her in the next room? Miss Richland is a fine girl, has a fine fortune, and must not be thrown away. Upon my honour, madam, I have a regard for Miss Richland; and, rather than she should be thrown away, I should think it no indignity to marry her myself. [*Exeunt.*

Enter OLIVIA *and* LEONTINE.

Leo. And yet, trust me, Olivia, I had every reason to expect Miss Richland's refusal, as I did every thing in my power to deserve it. Her indelicacy surprises me!

Oliv. Sure, Leontine, there's nothing so indelicate in being sensible of your merit. If so, I fear I shall be the most guilty thing alive.

Leo. But you mistake, my dear. The same attention I used to advance my merit with you, I practised to lessen it with her. What more could I do?

Oliv. Let us now rather consider what's to be done. We have both dissembled too long—I have always been ashamed—I am now quite weary of it. Sure I could never have undergone so much for any other but you.

Leo. And you shall find my gratitude equal to your kindest compliance. Though our friends should totally forsake us, Olivia, we can draw upon content for the deficiencies of fortune.

Oliv. Then why should we defer our scheme of humble happiness, when it is now in our power? I may be the favourite of your father, it is true; but can it ever be thought, that his present kindness to a supposed child will continue to a known deceiver?

Leo. I have many reasons to believe it will. As his attachments are but few, they are lasting. His own marriage was a private one, as ours may

be. Besides, I have sounded him already at a distance, and find all his answers exactly to our wish. Nay, by an expression or two that dropped from him, I am induced to think he knows of this affair.

Oliv. Indeed! But that would be a happiness too great to be expected.

Leo. However it be, I'm certain you have power over him; and am persuaded, if you inform'd him of our situation, that he would be disposed to pardon it.

Oliv. You had equal expectations, Leontine, from your last scheme with Miss Richland, which you find has succeeded most wretchedly.

Leo. And that's the best reason for trying another.

Oliv. If it must be so, I submit.

Leo. As we could wish, he comes this way. Now, my dearest Olivia, be resolute. I'll just retire within hearing, to come in at a proper time, either to share your danger, or confirm your victory. [*Exit.*

Enter CROAKER.

Cro. Yes, I must forgive her; and yet not too easily neither. It will be proper to keep up the decorums of resentment a little, if it be only to impress her with an idea of my authority.

Oliv. How I tremble to approach him!—Might I presume, sir—if I interrupt you——

Cro. No, child, where I have an affection, it is not a little thing can interrupt me. Affection gets over little things.

Oliv. Sir, you're too kind. I'm sensible how ill I deserve this partiality. Yet, Heaven knows, there is nothing I would not do to gain it.

Cro. And you have but too well succeeded, you little hussy, you. With those endearing ways of yours, on my conscience, I could be brought to forgive any thing, unless it were a very great offence indeed.

Oliv. But mine is such an offence—When you know my guilt—Yes, you shall know it, though I feel the greatest pain in the confession.

Cro. Why then, if it be so very great a pain, you may spare yourself the trouble, for I know every syllable of the matter before you begin.

Oliv. Indeed! Then I'm undone.

Cro. Ay, miss, you wanted to steal a match, without letting me know it, did you? But I'm not worth being consulted, I suppose, when there's to be a marriage in my own family. No, I'm to have no hand in the disposal of my own children. No, I'm nobody. I'm to be a mere article of family lumber; a piece of crack'd china to be stuck up in a corner.

Oliv. Dear sir, nothing but the dread of your authority could induce us to conceal it from you.

Cro. No, no, my consequence is no more; I'm as little minded as a dead Russian in winter, just stuck up with a pipe in his mouth till there comes a thaw—It goes to my heart to vex her. [*Aside.*

Oliv. I was prepared, sir, for your anger, and despair'd of pardon, even while I presumed to ask it. But your severity shall never abate my affection, as my punishment is but justice.

Cro. And yet you should not despair neither, Livy. We ought to hope all for the best.

Oliv. And do you permit me to hope, sir? Can I ever expect to be forgiven? But hope has too long deceived me.

Cro. Why then, child, it sha'n't deceive you now, for I forgive you this very moment. I forgive you all; and now you are indeed my daughter.

Oliv. O transport! this kindness overpowers me.

Cro. I was always against severity to our children. We have been young and giddy ourselves, and we cann't expect boys and girls to be old before their time.

Oliv. What generosity! But can you forget the many falsehoods, the dissimulation———

Cro. You did indeed dissemble, you urchin, you; but where's the girl that won't dissemble for a husband! my wife and I had never been married, if we had not dissembled a little before-hand.

Oliv. It shall be my future care never to put such generosity to a second trial. And as for the partner of my offence and folly, from his native honour, and the just sense he has of his duty, I can answer for him that——

Enter LEONTINE.

Leo. Permit him thus to answer for himself. [*Kneeling.*] Thus, sir, let me speak my gratitude for this unmerited forgiveness. Yes, sir, this even exceeds all your former tenderness: I now can boast the most indulgent of fathers. The life he gave, compared to this, was but a trifling blessing.

Cro. And, good sir, who sent for you, with that fine tragedy face, and flourishing manner? I don't know what we have to do with your gratitude upon this occasion.

Leo. How, sir! is it possible to be silent when so much obliged? Would you refuse me the pleasure of being grateful? Of adding my thanks to my Olivia's? Of sharing in the transports that you have thus occasion'd?

Cro. Lord, sir, we can be happy enough, without your coming in to make up the party. I don't know what's the matter with the boy all this day; he has got into such a rhodomontade manner all the morning!

Leo. But, sir, I that have so large a part in the benefit, is it not my duty to shew my joy? Is the being admitted to your favour so slight an obligation? Is the happiness of marrying my Olivia so small a blessing?

Cro. Marrying Olivia! marrying Olivia! marrying his own sister! Sure the boy is out of his senses. His own sister!

Leo. My sister!

Oliv. Sister! How have I been mistaken! [*Aside.*

Leo. Some cursed mistake in all this, I find. [*Aside.*

Cro. What does the booby mean, or has he any

meaning? Eh, what do you mean, you blockhead you?

Leo. Mean, sir—why, sir—only when my sister is to be married, that I have the pleasure of marrying her, sir; that is, of giving her away, sir—— I have made a point of it.

Cro. O, is that all? Give her away. You have made a point of it. Then you had as good make a point of first giving away yourself, as I'm going to prepare the writings between you and Miss Richland this very minute. What a fuss is here about nothing!—Why, what's the matter now? I thought I had made *you* at least as happy as you could wish.

Oliv. O! yes, sir, very happy.

Cro. Do you foresee any thing, child? You look as if you did. I think, if any thing was to be foreseen, I have as sharp a look-out as another: and yet I foresee nothing. [*Exit.*

Oliv. What can it mean?

Leo. He knows something, and yet for my life I cann't tell what.

Oliv. It cann't be the connection between us, I'm pretty certain.

Leo. Whatever it be, my dearest, I'm resolved to put it out of fortune's power to repeat our mortification. I'll haste, and prepare for our journey to Scotland this very evening. My friend Honeywood has promised me his advice and assistance. I'll go to him, and repose our distresses on his friendly bosom: and I know so much of his honest heart, that if he cann't relieve our uneasiness, he will at least share them. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Young* HONEYWOOD'S *House.*

Bailiff, HONEYWOOD, *and Follower.*

Bail. Look'e, sir, I have arrested as good men as you in my time: no disparagement of you neither. Men that would go forty guineas on a game of cribbage. I challenge the town to shew a man in more genteeler practice than myself.

Hon. Without all question, Mr ———. I forget your name, sir.

Bail. How can you forget what you never knew? He, he, he!

Hon. May I beg leave to ask your name?

Bail. Yes, you may.

Hon. Then, pray, sir, what is your name, sir?

Bail. That I did n't promise to tell you. He, he, he! A joke breaks no bones, as we say among us that practise the law.

Hon. You may have reason for keeping it a secret, perhaps?

Bail. The law does nothing without reason. I'm ashamed to tell my name to no man, sir. If you can shew cause, as why, upon a special capus, that I should prove my name———But, come, Timothy Twitch is my name. And, now you know my name, what have you to say to that?

Hon. Nothing in the world, good Mr Twitch, but that I have a favour to ask, that's all.

Bail. Ay, favours are more easily asked than granted, as we say among us that practise the law. I have taken an oath against granting favours. Would you have me perjure myself?

Hon. But my request will come recommended in so strong a manner, as, I believe, you'll have no scruple. [*Pulling out his purse.*] The thing is only this: I believe I shall be able to discharge this trifle in two or three days at farthest; but, as I would not have the affair known for the world, I have thoughts of keeping you, and your friend here, about me till the debt is discharged; for which I shall be properly grateful.

Bail. Oh! that's another maxum, and altogether within my oath. For certain, if an honest man is to get any thing by a thing, there's no reason why all things should not be done in civility.

Hon. Doubtless, all trades must live, Mr Twitch; and yours is a necessary one. [*Gives him money.*

Bail. Oh! your honour; I hope your honour takes nothing amiss as I does, as I does nothing but my duty in so doing. I'm sure no man can say I ever gave a gentleman that was a gentleman ill usage. If I saw that a gentleman was a gentleman, I have taken money not to see him for ten weeks together.

Hon. Tenderness is a virtue, Mr Twitch.

Bail. Ay, sir, it's a perfect treasure. I love to see a gentleman with a tender heart. I don't know, but I think I have a tender heart myself. If all that I have lost by my heart was put together, it would make a—but no matter for that.

Hon. Don't account it lost, Mr Twitch. The ingratitude of the world can never deprive us of the conscious happiness of having acted with humanity ourselves.

Bail. Humanity, sir, is a jewel. It's better than gold. I love humanity. People may say, that we, in our way, have no humanity; but I'll shew you my humanity this moment. There's my follower here, little Flanigan, with a wife and four children, a guinea or two would be more to him than twice as much to another. Now, as I cann't shew him any humanity myself, I must beg leave you'll do it for me.

Hon. I assure you, Mr Twitch, yours is a most powerful recommendation.

[*Giving money to the Follower.*

Bail. Sir, you're a gentleman. I see you know what to do with your money. But, to business: we are to be with you here as your friends, I suppose. But set in case company comes.—Little Flanigan here, to be sure, has a good face; a very good face: but then he is a little seedy, as we say

among us that practise the law. Not well in clothes. Smoke the pocket-holes.

Hon. Well, that shall be remedied without delay.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Sir, Miss Richland is below.

Hon. How unlucky! Detain her a moment. We must improve, my good friend, little Mr Flanigan's appearance first. Here, let Mr Flanigan have a suit of my clothes—quick—the brown and silver ——Do you hear?

Ser. That your honour gave away to the begging gentleman that makes verses, because it was as good as new.

Hon. The white and gold then.

Ser. That, your honour, I made bold to sell, because it was good for nothing.

Hon. Well, the first that comes to hand then. The blue and gold. I believe Mr Flanigan will look best in blue. [*Exit* FLANIGAN.

Bail. Rabbit me, but little Flanigan will look well in any thing! Ah, if your honour knew that bit of flesh as well as I do, you'd be perfectly in love with him. There's not a prettier scout in the four counties after a shy-cock than he. Scents like a hound, sticks like a weasel. He was master of the ceremonies to the black queen of Morocco when I took him to follow me.

Re-enter FLANIGAN.

Heh, ecod, I think he looks so well, that I don't care if I have a suit from the same place for myself.

Hon. Well, well, I hear the lady coming. Dear Mr Twitch, I beg you'll give your friend directions not to speak. As for yourself, I know you will say nothing without being directed.

Bail. Never you fear me; I'll shew the lady that I have something to say for myself as well as another. One man has one way of talking, and another man has another, that's all the difference between them.

Enter Miss RICHLAND *and her Maid.*

Miss Rich. You'll be surprised, sir, with this visit. But you know I'm yet to thank you for choosing my little library.

Hon. Thanks, madam, are unnecessary, as it was I that was obliged by your commands. Chairs here. Two of my very good friends, Mr Twitch and Mr Flanigan. Pray, gentlemen, sit without ceremony.

Miss Rich. Who can these odd-looking men be! I fear it is as I was informed. It must be so. [*Aside.*

Bail. [*After a pause.*] Pretty weather, very pretty weather for the time of the year, madam.

Fol. Very good circuit weather in the country.

Hon. You officers are generally favourites among the ladies. My friends, madam, have been upon very disagreeable duty, I assure you. The fair should, in some measure, recompence the toil of the brave.

Miss Rich. Our officers do indeed deserve every favour. The gentlemen are in the marine service, I presume, sir?

Hon. Why, madam, they do—occasionally serve in the Fleet, madam. A dangerous service.

Miss Rich. I'm told so. And, I own, it has often surprised me, that, while we have had so many instances of bravery there, we have had so few of wit at home to praise it.

Hon. I grant, madam, that our poets have not written as our soldiers have fought; but they have done all they could, and Hawke or Amherst could do no more.

Miss Rich. I'm quite displeased when I see a fine subject spoiled by a dull writer.

Hon. We should not be so severe against dull writers, madam. It is ten to one, but the dullest writer exceeds the most rigid French critic who presumes to despise him.

Fol. Damn the French! the parle vous, and all that belongs to them!

Miss Rich. Sir!

Hon. Ha, ha, ha! honest Mr Flanigan. A true English officer, madam; he's not contented with beating the French, but he will scold them too.

Miss Rich. Yet, Mr Honeywood, this does not convince me but that severity in criticism is necessary. It was our first adopting the severity of French taste that has brought them in turn to taste us.

Bail. Taste us! By the lord, madam, they devour us. Give Mounseers but a taste, and I'll be damn'd but they come in for a belly-full.

Miss Rich. Very extraordinary this.

Fol. But very true. What makes the bread rising? the parle vous that devour us. What makes the mutton five-pence a pound? the parle vous that eat it up. What makes the beer three-pence half-penny a pot?——

Hon. Ah! the vulgar rogues, all will be out! Right, gentlemen, very right, upon my word, and quite to the purpose. They draw a parallel, madam, between the mental taste and that of our senses. We are injured as much by French severity in the one, as by French rapacity in the other. That's their meaning.

Miss Rich. Though I don't see the force of the parallel, yet I'll own that we should sometimes pardon books, as we do our friends, that have now and then agreeable absurdities to recommend them.

Bail. That's all my eye. The king only can pardon, as the law says: for set in case——

Hon. I'm quite of your opinion, sir. I see the whole drift of your argument. Yes, certainly, our presuming to pardon any work is arrogating a power that belongs to another. If all have power to condemn, what writer can be free?

Bail. By his habus corpus. His habus corpus can set him free at any time. For set in case——

Hon. I'm obliged to you, sir, for the hint. If, madam, as my friend observes, our laws are so careful of a gentleman's person, sure we ought to be equally careful of his dearer part, his fame.

Fol. Ay, but if so be a man's nabb'd, you know—

Hon. Mr Flanigan, if you spoke for ever, you could not improve the last observation. For my own part, I think it conclusive.

Bail. As for the matter of that, mayhap——

Hon. Nay, sir, give me leave in this instance to

be positive. For where is the necessity of censuring works without genius, which must shortly sink of themselves? what is it, but aiming our unnecessary blow against a victim already under the hands of justice?

Bail. Justice! O, by the elevens, if you talk about justice, I think I am at home there; for, in a course of law———

Hon. My dear Mr Twitch, I discern what you'd be at perfectly, and I believe the lady must be sensible of the art with which it is introduced. I suppose you perceive the meaning, madam, of his course of law?

Miss Rich. I protest, sir, I do not. I perceive only that you answer one gentleman before he has finished, and the other before he has well begun.

Bail. Madam, you are a gentlewoman, and I will make the matter out. This here question is about severity and justice, and pardon, and the like of they. Now, to explain the thing——

Hon. O! curse your explanations. [*Aside.*

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr Leontine, sir, below, desires to speak with you upon earnest business.

Hon. That's lucky! [*Aside.*] Dear madam, you'll excuse me, and my good friends here, for a few minutes. There are books, madam, to amuse you. Come, gentlemen, you know I make no ceremony with such friends. After you, sir. Excuse me. Well, if I must. But, I know your natural politeness.

Bail. Before and behind, you know.

Fol. Ay, ay, before and behind, before and behind.

[*Exeunt* HONEYWOOD, *Bailiff and Follower.*

Miss Rich. What can all this mean, Garnet?

Gar. Mean, madam! Why, what should it mean, but what Mr Lofty sent you here to see? These people he calls officers, are officers sure enough: sheriff's officers; bailiffs, madam.

Miss Rich. Ay, it is certainly so. Well, though his perplexities are far from giving me pleasure, yet, I own, there's something very ridiculous in them, and a just punishment for his dissimulation.

Gar. And so they are. But I wonder, madam, that the lawyer you just employed to pay his debts, and set him free, has not done it by this time. He ought at least to have been here before now. But lawyers are always more ready to get a man into troubles, than out of them.

Enter Sir WILLIAM.

Sir Wil. For Miss Richland to undertake setting him free, I own, was quite unexpected. It has totally unhinged my schemes to reclaim him. Yet it gives me pleasure to find, that, among a number of worthless friendships, he has made one acquisition of real value; for there must be some softer passion on her side that prompts this generosity. Ha! here before me: I'll endeavour to sound her affections.—Madam, as I am the person that have had some demands upon the gentleman of this house, I hope you'll excuse me, if, before I enlarged him, I wanted to see yourself.

Miss Rich. The precaution was very unnecessary, sir. I suppose your wants were only such as my agent had power to satisfy.

Sir Wil. Partly, madam. But I was also willing you should be fully apprized of the character of the gentleman you intended to serve.

Miss Rich. It must come, sir, with a very ill grace from you. To censure it, after what you have done, would look like malice; and to speak favourably of a character you have oppressed, would be impeaching your own. And sure, his tenderness, his humanity, his universal friendship, may atone for many faults.

Sir Wil. That friendship, madam, which is exerted in too wide a sphere, becomes totally useless. Our bounty, like a drop of water, disappears when diffused too widely. They, who pretend most to this universal benevolence, are either deceivers, or dupes: men who desire to cover their private ill-nature by a pretended regard for all; or men who, reasoning themselves into false feelings, are more earnest in pursuit of splendid than of useful virtues.

Miss Rich. I am surprised, sir, to hear one who has probably been a gainer by the folly of others, so severe in his censure of it.

Sir Wil. Whatever I may have gained by folly, madam, you see I am willing to prevent your losing by it.

Miss Rich. Your cares for me, sir, are unnecessary. I always suspect those services which are denied where they are wanted, and offered, perhaps, in hopes of a refusal. No, sir, my directions have been given, and I insist upon their being complied with.

Sir Wil. Thou amiable woman, I can no longer contain the expressions of my gratitude, my pleasure! You see before you one who has been equally careful of his interest: one, who has for some time been a concealed spectator of his follies, and only punished, in hopes to reclaim them—his uncle!

Miss Rich. Sir William Honeywood! You amaze me. How shall I conceal my confusion? I fear, sir, you'll think I have been too forward in my services. I confess I———

Sir Wil. Don't make any apologies, madam: I only find myself unable to repay the obligation. And yet, I have been trying my interest of late to serve you. Having learnt, madam, that you had some demands upon government, I have, though unasked, been your solicitor there.

Miss Rich. Sir, I'm infinitely obliged to your intentions; but my guardian has employed another gentleman, who assures him of success.

Sir Wil. Who, the important little man that visits here? Trust me, madam, he's quite contemptible among men in power, and utterly unable to serve you. Mr Lofty's promises are much better known to people of fashion than his person, I assure you.

Miss Rich. How have we been deceived! As sure as can be here he comes.

Sir Wil. Does he? Remember I'm to continue unknown. My return to England has not as yet

been made public. With what impudence he enters!

Enter LOFTY.

Lof. Let the chariot—let my chariot drive off; I'll visit to his grace's in a chair. Miss Richland here before me! Punctual, as usual, to the calls of humanity. I'm very sorry, madam, things of this kind should happen, especially to a man I have shewn every where, and carried amongst us as a particular acquaintance.

Miss Rich. I find, sir, you have the art of making the misfortunes of others your own.

Lof. My dear madam, what can a private man like me do? One man cann't do every thing; and then I do so much in this way every day: let me see, something considerable might be done for him by subscription; it could not fail, if I carried the list. I'll undertake to set down a brace of dukes, two dozen lords, and half the lower house, at my own peril.

Sir Wil. And after all, it's more than probable, sir, he might reject the offer of such powerful patronage.

Lof. Then, madam, what can we do? You know I never make promises. In truth, I once or twice tried to do something with him in the way of business; but, as I often told his uncle, Sir William Honeywood, the man was utterly impracticable.

Sir Wil. His uncle! Then that gentleman, I suppose, is a particular friend of yours.

Lof. Meaning me, sir?—Yes, madam, as I often said, my dear Sir William, you are sensible I would do any thing, as far as my poor interest goes, to serve your family; but what can be done? there's no procuring first-rate places for ninth-rate abilities.

Miss Rich. I have heard of Sir William Honeywood; he's abroad in employment; he confided in your judgment, I suppose.

Lof. Why, yes, madam; I believe Sir William had some reason to confide in my judgment; one little reason, perhaps.

Miss Rich. Pray, sir, what was it?

Lof. Why, madam—but let it go no further—it was I procured him a place.

Sir Wil. Did you, sir?

Lof. Either you or I, sir.

Miss Rich. This, Mr Lofty, was very kind indeed.

Lof. I did love him, to be sure; he had some amusing qualities; no man was fitter to be toast-master to a club, or had a better head.

Miss Rich. A better head?

Lof. Ay, at a bottle. To be sure, he was as dull as a choice spirit; but, hang it, he was grateful, very grateful; and gratitude hides a multitude of faults.

Sir Wil. He might have reason, perhaps. His place is pretty considerable, I'm told.

Lof. A trifle, a mere trifle, among us men of business. The truth is, he wanted dignity to fill up a greater.

Sir Wil. Dignity of person, do you mean, sir? I'm told he's much about my size and figure, sir.

Lof. Ay, tall enough for a marching regiment; but then he wanted a something—a consequence of form—a kind of a—I believe the lady perceives my meaning?

Miss Rich. O perfectly; you courtiers can do any thing, I see.

Lof. My dear madam, all this is but a mere exchange; we do greater things for one another every day. Why, as thus, now: let me suppose you the first lord of the treasury, you have an employment in you that I want; I have a place in me that you want; do me here, do you there; interest of both sides, few words, flat done and done, and it's over.

Sir Wil. A thought strikes me. [*Aside.*] Now you mention Sir William Honeywood, madam, and as he seems, sir, an acquaintance of yours, you'll be glad to hear he's arrived from Italy; I had it from a friend who knows him as well as he does me, and you may depend on my information.

Lof. The devil he is! If I had known that, we should not have been quite so well acquainted.—[*Aside.*

Sir Wil. He is certainly returned; and, as this gentleman is a friend of yours, he can be of signal service to us, by introducing me to him; there are some papers relative to your affairs, that require dispatch and his inspection.

Miss Rich. This gentleman, Mr Lofty, is a person employed in my affairs: I know you'll serve us.

Lof. My dear madam, I live but to serve you. Sir William shall even wait upon him, if you think proper to command it.

Sir Wil. That would be quite unnecessary.

Lof. Well, we must introduce you then. Call upon me—let me see—ay, in two days.

Sir Wil. Now, or the opportunity will be lost for ever.

Lof. Well, if it must be now, now let it be. But, damn it, that's unfortunate; my Lord Grig's cursed Pensacola business comes on this very hour, and I'm engaged to attend—Another time—

Sir Wil. A short letter to Sir William will do.

Lof. You shall have it; yet, in my opinion, a letter is a very bad way of going to work; face to face, that's my way.

Sir Wil. The letter, sir, will do quite as well.

Lof. Zounds, sir, do you pretend to direct me; direct me in the business of office? Do you know me, sir? Who am I?

Miss Rich. Dear Mr Lofty, this request is not so much his as mine; if my commands—but you despise my power.

Lof. Delicate creature! your commands could even controul a debate at midnight; to a power so constitutional, I am all obedience and tranquillity.—He shall have a letter; where is my secretary, Dubardieu? And yet, I protest I don't like this way of doing business. I think, if I spoke first to Sir William—But you will have it so.

[*Exit with* MISS RICH.

Sir Wil. Ha, ha, ha! This too is one of my nephew's hopeful associates. O vanity, thou constant deceiver, how do all thy efforts to exalt, serve but to sink us! Thy false colourings, like those employed to heighten beauty, only seem to mend that bloom which they contribute to destroy! I'm not displeased at this interview; exposing this fellow's impudence to the contempt it deserves, may be of use to my design; at least, if he can reflect, it will be of use to himself.

Enter JARVIS.

Sir Wil. How now, Jarvis; where's your master, my nephew?

Jar. At his wit's end, I believe: he's scarce gotten out of one scrape, but he's running his head into another.

Sir Wil. How so?

Jar. The house has but just been cleared of the bailiffs, and now he's again engaging tooth and nail in assisting old Croaker's son to patch up a clandestine match with the young lady that passes in the house for his sister.

Sir Wil. Ever busy to serve others.

Jar. Ay, any body but himself. The young couple, it seems, are just setting out for Scotland, and he supplies them with money for the journey.

Sir Wil. Money! how is he able to supply others, who has scarce any for himself?

Jar. Why, there it is; he has no money, that's true; but then, as he never said no to any request in his life, he has given them a bill drawn by a friend of his upon a merchant in the city, which I am to get changed; for you must know that I am to go with them to Scotland myself.

Sir Wil. How!

Jar. It seems the young gentleman is obliged to take a different road from his mistress, as he is to call upon an uncle of his that lives out of the way, in order to prepare a place for their reception, when they return; so they have borrowed me from my master, as the properest person to attend the young lady down.

Sir Wil. To the land of matrimony! A pleasant journey, Jarvis.

Jar. Ay, but I'm only to have all the fatigues on't.

Sir Wil. Well, it may be shorter, and less fatiguing, than you imagine. I know but too much of the young lady's family and connections, whom I have seen abroad. I have also discover'd that Miss Richland is not indifferent to my thoughtless nephew; and will endeavour, tho' I fear, in vain, to establish that connection. But, come, the letter I wait for must be almost finish'd; I'll let you further into my intentions in the next room.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—CROAKER'S *House.*

Enter LOFTY.

Lof. Well, sure the devil's in me of late, for running my head into such defiles, as nothing but a genius like my own could draw me from. I was formerly contented to husband out my places and pensions with some degree of frugality; but, curse it! of late I have given away the whole court register in less time than they could print the title-page; yet, hang it, why scruple a lie or two to come at a fine girl, when I every day tell a thousand for nothing? Ha! Honeywood here before me. Could Miss Richland have set him at liberty?

Enter HONEYWOOD.

Mr Honeywood, I'm glad to see you abroad again. I find my concurrence was not necessary in your unfortunate affairs. I had put things in a train to do your business; but it is not for me to say what I intended doing.

Hon. It was unfortunate indeed, sir. But what adds to my uneasiness is, that, while you seem to be acquainted with my misfortune, I myself continue still a stranger to my benefactor.

Lof. How! not know the friend that served you?

Hon. Cann't guess at the person.

Lof. Enquire.

Hon. I have, but all I can learn is, that he chooses to remain concealed, and that all enquiry must be fruitless.

Lof. Must be fruitless?

Hon. Absolutely fruitless.

Lof. Sure of that?

Hon. Very sure.

Lof. Then I'll be damn'd if you shall ever know it from me.

Hon. How, sir!

Lof. I suppose now, Mr Honeywood, you think my rent-roll very considerable, and that I have vast sums of money to throw away; I know you do. The world, to be sure, says such things of me.

Hon. The world, by what I learn, is no stranger to your generosity. But where does this tend?

Lof. To nothing; nothing in the world. The town, to be sure, when it makes such a thing as me the subject of conversation, has asserted, that I never yet patronized a man of merit.

Hon. I have heard instances to the contrary, even from yourself.

Lof. Yes, Honeywood, and there are instances to the contrary, that you shall never hear from myself.

Hon. Ha, dear sir, permit me to ask you but one question.

Lof. Sir, ask me no questions: I say, sir, ask me no questions; I'll be damn'd if I answer them.

Hon. I will ask no further. My friend, my benefactor, it is, it must be here, that I am indebted

for freedom, for honour. Yes, thou worthiest of men, from the beginning I suspected it, but was afraid to return thanks; which, if undeserved, might seem reproaches.

Lof. I protest I don't understand all this, Mr Honeywood. You treat me very cavalierly. I do assure you, sir——Blood, sir! cann't a man be permitted to enjoy the luxury of his own feelings without all this parade?

Hon. Nay, do not attempt to conceal an action that adds to your honour. Your looks, your air, your manner, all confess it.

Lof. Confess it, sir! Torture itself, sir, shall never bring me to confess it. Mr Honeywood, I have admitted you upon terms of friendship. Don't let us fall out; make me happy, and let this be buried in oblivion. You know I hate ostentation; you know I do—Come, come, Honeywood, you know I always loved to be a friend, and not a patron. I beg this may make no kind of distance between us. Come, come, you and I must be more familiar——indeed we must.

Hon. Heavens! can I ever repay such friendship? Is there any way? Thou best of men, can I ever return the obligation?

Lof. A bagatelle, a mere bagatelle. But I see your heart is labouring to be grateful. You shall be grateful. It would be cruel to disappoint you.

Hon. How? Teach me the manner. Is there any way?

Lof. From this moment you're mine. Yes, my friend, you shall know it—I'm in love.

Hon. And can I assist you?

Lof. Nobody so well.

Hon. In what manner? I'm all impatience.

Lof. You shall make love for me.

Hon. And to whom shall I speak in your favour?

Lof. To a lady with whom you have great interest, I assure you—Miss Richland.

Hon. Miss Richland!

Lof. Yes, Miss Richland. She has struck the blow up to the hilt in my bosom, by Jupiter.

Hon. Heavens! was ever any thing more unfortunate! It is too much to be endured.

Lof. Unfortunate indeed! and yet I can endure it, till you have opened the affair to her for me. Between ourselves, I think she likes me. I'm not apt to boast, but I think she does.

Hon. Indeed! But do you know the person you apply to?

Lof. Yes, I know you are her friend and mine: that's enough. To you, therefore, I commit the success of my passion. I'll say no more, let friendship do the rest. I have only to add, that, if at any time my little interest can be of service—but, hang it, I'll make no promises—you know my interest is yours at any time. No apologies, my friend; I'll not be answered, it shall be so. [*Exit.*

Hon. Open, generous, unsuspecting man! he little thinks that I love her too; and with such an ardent passion!——But then it was ever but a vain and hopeless one; my torment, my persecution! What shall I do! Love, friendship, a hopeless passino, a deserving friend! Love, that has been my tormentor; a friend, that has, perhaps, distress'd himself to serve me.——It shall be so. Yes, I will discard the fondling hope from my bosom, and exert all my influence in his favour. And yet to see her in the possession of another!——Insupportable. But then to betray a generous, trusting friend!——Worse, worse. Yes, I'm resolved. Let me but be the instrument of their happiness, and then quit a country, where I must for ever despair of finding my own. [*Exit.*

Enter OLIVIA *and* GARNET, *who carries a Milliner's Box.*

Oliv. Dear me, I wish this journey were over. No news of Jarvis yet? I believe the old peevish creature delays purely to vex me.

Gar. Why, to be sure, madam, I did hear him say, a little snubbing before marriage would teach you to bear it the better afterwards.

Oliv. To be gone a full hour, tho' he had only to get a bill changed in the city! How provoking!

Gar. I'll lay my life, Mr Leontine, that had twice as much to do, is setting off by this time from his inn; and here you are left behind.

Oliv. Well, let us be prepared for his coming, however.——Are you sure you have omitted nothing, Garnet?

Gar. Not a stick, madam—all's here.——Yet I wish you could take the white and silver to be married in.——It's the worst luck in the world, in any thing but white. I knew one Bett Stubbs of our town, that was married in red; and, sure as eggs is eggs, the bridegroom and she had a miff before morning.

Oliv. No matter.——I'm all impatience till we are out of the house.

Gar. Bless me, madam, I had almost forgot the wedding ring!——The sweet little thing!——I don't think it would go on my little finger. And what if I put in a gentleman's night-cap, in case of necessity, madam? But here's Jarvis.

Enter JARVIS.

Oliv. O, Jarvis, are you come at last? We have been ready this half hour. Now let's be going. Let us fly!

Jar. Ay, to Jericho; for we shall have no going to Scotland this bout, I fancy.

Oliv. How! what's the matter?

Jar. Money, money is the matter, madam. We have got no money. What the plague do you send me of your fool's errand for? My master's bill upon the city is not worth a rush. Here it is; Mrs Garnet may pin up her hair with it.

Oliv. Undone! How could Honeywood serve us so! What shall we do? Cann't we go without it?

Jar. Go to Scotland without money! To Scotland without money! Lord, how some people understand geography! We might as well set sail for Patagonia upon a cork-jacket.

Oliv. Such a disappointment! What a base insincere man was your master, to serve us in this manner! Is this his good-nature?

Jar. Nay, don't talk ill of my master, madam. I won't bear to hear any body talk ill of him but myself.

Gar. Bless us! now I think on't, madam, you need not be under any uneasiness: I saw Mr Leontine receive forty guineas from his father just before he set out, and he cann't yet have left the inn. A short letter will reach him there.

Oliv. Well remember'd, Garnet; I'll write immediately.—How's this?—Bless me, my hand trembles so I cann't write a word. Do you write, Garnet; and, upon second thought, it will be better from you.

Gar. Truly, madam, I write and indite but poorly. I never was cute at my larning. But I'll do what I can to please you. Let me see. All out of my own head, I suppose?

Oliv. Whatever you please.

Gar. [*Writing.*] Muster Croaker—Twenty guineas, madam?

Oliv. Ay, twenty will do.

Gar. At the bar of the Talbot till call'd for.—Expedition—We'll be blown up—All of a flame ——Quick, dispatch—Cupid, the little God of Love——I conclude it, madam, with Cupid; I love to see a love-letter end like poetry.

Oliv. Well, well, what you please, any thing. But how shall we send it? I can trust none of the servants of this family.

Gar. Odso, madam, Mr Honeywood's butler is in the next room; he's a dear, sweet man; he'll do any thing for me.

Jar. He! the dog, he'll certainly commit some blunder. He's drunk and sober ten times a day.

Oliv. No matter. Fly, Garnet; any body we can trust will do. [*Exit* GARNET.] Well, Jarvis, now we can have nothing more to interrupt us. You may take up the things, and carry them on to the inn. Have you no hands, Jarvis?

Jar. Soft and fair, young lady. You that are going to be married, think things can never be done too fast; but we that are old, and know what we are about, must elope methodically, madam.

Oliv. Well, sure, if my indiscretions were to be done over again——

Jar. My life for it, you would do them ten times over

Oliv. Why will you talk so? If you knew how unhappy they make me——

Jar. Very unhappy, no doubt: I was once just as unhappy when I was going to be married myself. I'll tell you a story about that———

Oliv. A story! when I'm all impatience to be away. Was there ever such a dilatory creature!—

Jar. Well, madam, if we must march, why we will march; that's all. Tho', odds bobs, we have still forgot one thing,—we should never travel without—a case of good razors, and a box of shaving-powder. But no matter; I believe we shall be pretty well shaved by the way. [*Going*

Enter GARNET.

Gar. Undone, undone, madam! Ah, Mr Jarvis, you said right enough. As sure as death Mr Honeywood's rogue of a drunken butler dropp'd the letter before he went ten yards from the door. There's old Croaker has just pick'd it up, and is this moment reading it to himself in the hall.

Oliv. Unfortunate! We shall be discover'd.

Gar. No, madam: don't be uneasy; he can make neither head nor tail of it. To be sure he looks as if he was broke loose from Bedlam about it, but he cann't find what it means for all that. O Lud, he is coming this way all in the horrors!

Oliv. Then let us leave the house this instant, for fear he should ask farther questions. In the mean time, Garnet, do you write, and send off just such another. [*Exeunt.*

Enter CROAKER.

Cro. Death and destruction! Are all the horrors of air, fire, and water, to be levelled only at me? Am I only to be singled out for gunpowder-plots, combustibles, and conflagration?——Here it is—An incendiary letter dropp'd at my door. 'To Muster Croaker, these with speed.' Ay, ay, plain enough the direction: all in the genuine incendiary spelling, and as cramp as the devil. 'With speed.' O, confound your speed! But let me read it once more. [*Reads.*] 'Muster Croaker, as soon as yowe see this, leve twenty gunnes at the bar of the Talbood tell caled for, or yowe and yower experetion will be al blown up.' Ah, but too plain. Blood and gunpowder in every line of it. Blown up! murderous dog! All blown up!——Heavens! what have I and my poor family done, to be all blown up! [*Reads.*] 'Our pockets are low, and money we must have.' Ay, there's the reason; they'll blow us up because they have got low pockets. [*Reads.*] 'It is but a short time you have to consider; for if this takes wind, the house will be all quickly of a flame.' Inhuman monsters! blow us up, and then burn us. The earthquake at Lisbon was but a bonfire to it. [*Reads.*] 'Make quick dispatch, and so no more at present. But may Cupid, the little God of Love, go with you wherever you go.' The little God of Love! Cupid, the little God of Love, go with me! Go you to the devil, you and your little Cupid together! I'm so frightened, I scarce know whether I sit, stand or go. Perhaps this moment I'm treading on lighted matches, blazing brimstone, and barrels of gunpowder. They are preparing to blow me up into the clouds. Murder! We shall be all burnt in our beds; we shall be all burnt in our beds!

Enter Miss RICHLAND.

Miss Rich. Lord, sir, what's the matter?

Cro. Murder's the matter. We shall be all blown up in our beds before morning.

Miss Rich. I hope not, sir.

Cro. What signifies what you hope, madam, when I have a certificate of it here in my hand. Will nothing alarm my family! Sleeping and eating, sleeping and eating, is the only work from morning till night in my house. My insensible crew could sleep, though rock'd by an earthquake; and fry beef steaks at a volcano.

Miss Rich. But, sir, you have alarmed them so

often already, we have nothing but earthquakes, famines, plagues, and mad dogs, from year's end to year's end. You remember, sir, it is not above a month ago, you assured us of a conspiracy among the bakers, to poison us in our bread; and so kept the whole family a week upon potatoes.

Cro. And potatoes were too good for them.—But why do I stand here talking with a girl, when I should be facing the enemy without? Here, John, Nicodemus, search the house. Look into the cellars, to see if there be any combustibles below; and above, in the apartments, that no matches be thrown in at the windows. Let all the fires be put out, and let the engine be drawn out in the yard, to play upon the house in case of necessity. [*Exit.*

Miss Rich. What can he mean by all this? Yet, why should I enquire, when he alarms us in this manner almost every day! But Honeywood has desired an interview with me in private. What can he mean; or, rather, what means this palpitation at his approach? It is the first time he ever shewed any thing in his conduct that seem'd particular. Sure he cannot mean to——but he's here.

Enter HONEYWOOD.

Hon. I presumed to solicit this interview, madam, before I left town, to be permitted—

Miss Rich. Indeed! leaving town, sir?—

Hon. Yes, madam: perhaps the kingdom. I have presumed, I say, to desire the favour of this interview—in order to disclose something which ur long friendship prompts. And yet my fears—

Miss Rich. His fears! What are his fears to mine! [*Aside.*] We have indeed been long acquainted, sir; very long. If I remember, our first meeting was at the French ambassador's.—Do you recollect how you were pleased to rally me upon my complexion there?

Hon. Perfectly, madam; I presumed to reprove you for painting: but your warmer blushes soon convinced the company that the colouring was all from nature.

Miss Rich. And yet you only meant it, in your good-natured way, to make me pay a compliment to myself. In the same manner you danced that night with the most awkward woman in company, because you saw nobody else would take her out.

Hon. Yes; and was rewarded the next night, by dancing with the finest woman in company, whom every body wish'd to take out.

Miss Rich. Well, sir, if you thought so then, I fear your judgment has since corrected the errors of a first impression. We generally shew to most advantage at first. Our sex are like poor tradesmen, that put all their best goods to be seen at the windows.

Hon. The first impression, madam, did indeed deceive me. I expected to find a woman with all the faults of conscious flattered beauty. I expected to find her vain and insolent. But every day has since taught me that it is possible to possess sense without pride, and beauty without affectation.

Miss Rich. This, sir, is a style very unusual with Mr Honeywood; and I should be glad to know why he thus attempts to increase that vanity, which his own lessons have taught me to despise.

Hon. I ask pardon, madam. Yet, from our long friendship, I presumed I might have some right to offer, without offence, what you may refuse without offending.

Miss Rich. Sir! I beg you'd reflect; though, I fear, I shall scarce have any power to refuse a request of yours; yet you may be precipitate: consider, sir.

Hon. I own my rashness: but, as I plead the cause of friendship, of one who loves—Don't be alarmed, madam—Who loves you with the most ardent passion; whose whole happiness is placed in you—

Miss Rich. I fear, sir, I shall never find whom you mean, by this description of him.

Hon. Ah, madam, it but too plainly points him out; though he should be too humble himself to urge his pretensions, or you too modest to understand them.

Miss Rich. Well; it would be affectation any longer to pretend ignorance; and, I will own, sir, I have long been prejudiced in his favour. It was but natural to wish to make his heart mine, as he seem'd himself ignorant of its value.

Hon. I see she always loved him. [*Aside*] I find, madam, you're already sensible of his worth, his passion. How happy is my friend, to be the favourite of one with such sense to distinguish merit, and such beauty to reward it.

Miss Rich. Your friend! sir. What friend?

Hon. My best friend—My friend Mr Lofty, madam.

Miss Rich. He, sir!

Hon. Yes, he, madam. He is, indeed, what your warmest wishes might have form'd him. And to his other qualities, he adds that of the most passionate regard for you.

Miss Rich. Amazement!—No more of this, I beg you, sir.

Hon. I see your confusion, madam, and know how to interpret it. And, since I so plainly read the language of your heart, shall I make my friend happy, by communicating your sentiments?

Miss Rich. By no means.

Hon. Excuse me; I must; I know you desire it.

Miss Rich. Mr Honeywood, let me tell you, that you wrong my sentiments and yourself. When I first applied to your friendship, I expected advice and assistance; but now, sir, I see that it is vain to expect happiness from him, who has been so bad an œconomist of his own; and that I must disclaim his friendship, who ceases to be a friend to himself. [*Exit.*

Hon. How is this! she has confess'd she loved him, and yet she seemed to part in displeasure. Can I have done any thing to reproach myself with? No; I believe not; yet, after all, these things should

not be done by a third person; I should have spared her confusion. My friendship carried me a little too far.

Enter CROAKER, *with the letter in his hand, and* *Mrs* CROAKER.

Mrs Cro. Ha, ha, ha! And so, my dear, it's your supreme wish that I should be quite wretched upon this occasion? Ha, ha!

Cro. [*Mimicking.*] Ha, ha, ha! and so, my dear, it's your supreme pleasure to give me no better consolation?

Mrs Cro. Positively, my dear: what is this incendiary stuff and trumpery to me? Our house may travel through the air like the house of Loretto, for aught I care, if I'm to be miserable in it.

Cro. Would to Heaven it were converted into an house of correction for your benefit. Have we not every thing to alarm us? Perhaps this very moment the tragedy is beginning.

Mrs Cro. Then let us reserve our distress till the rising of the curtain, or give them the money they want, and have done with them.

Cro. Give them my money!—And pray, what right have they to my money?

Mrs Cro. And pray, what right then have you to my good humour?

Cro. And so your good humour advises me to part with my money? Why then, to tell your good humour a piece of my mind, I'd sooner part with my wife. Here's Mr Honeywood, see what he'll say to it.—My dear Honeywood, look at this incendiary letter dropped at my door. It will freeze you with terror; and yet lovey here can read it, and laugh.

Mrs Cro. Yes, and so will Mr Honeywood.

Cro. If he does, I'll suffer to be hanged the next minute in the rogue's place, that's all.

Mrs Cro. Speak, Mr Honeywood; is there any thing more foolish than my husband's fright upon this occasion?

Hon. It would not become me to decide, madam; but, doubtless, the greatness of his terrors now will but invite them to renew their villainy another time.

Mrs Cro. I told you he'd be of my opinion.

Cro. How, sir! do you maintain that I should lie down under such an injury, and shew, neither by my tears or complaints, that I have something of the spirit of a man in me?

Hon. Pardon me, sir. You ought to make the loudest complaints, if you desire redress. The surest way to have redress, is to be earnest in the pursuit of it.

Cro. Ay, whose opinion is he of now?

Mrs Cro. But don't you think that laughing off our fears is the best way?

Hon. What is the best, madam, few can say; but I'll maintain it to be a very wise way.

Cro. But we are talking of the best.——Surely the best way is to face the enemy in the field, and not wait till he plunders us in our very bed-chamber.

Hon. Why, sir, as to the best, that—that's a very wise way too.

Mrs Cro. But can any thing be more absurd, than to double our distresses by our apprehensions, and put it in the power of every low fellow, that can scrawl ten words of wretched spelling, to torment us?

Hon. Without doubt; nothing more absurd.

Cro. How! would it not be more absurd to despise the rattle till we are bit by the snake?

Hon. Without doubt, perfectly absurd.

Cro. Then you are of my opinion?

Hon. Entirely.

Mrs Cro. And you reject mine?

Hon. Heavens forbid, madam! No, sure no reasoning can be more just than yours. We ought certainly to despise malice, if we cannot oppose it, and not make the incendiary's pen as fatal to our repose as the highwayman's pistol.

Mrs Cro. O! then you think I'm quite right?

Hon. Perfectly right.

Cro. A plague of plagues! we cann't be both right.——I ought to be sorry, or I ought to be glad.——My hat must be on my head, or my hat must be off.

Mrs Cro. Certainly, in two opposite opinions, if one be perfectly reasonable, the other cann't be perfectly right.

Hon. And why may not both be right, madam? Mr Croaker in earnestly seeking redress, and you in waiting the event with good humour. Pray let me see the letter again. I have it. This letter requires twenty guineas to be left at the bar of the Talbot inn. If it be indeed an incendiary letter, what if you and I, sir, go there; and, when the writer comes to be paid his expected booty, seize him?

Cro. My dear friend, it's the very thing; the very thing.——While I walk by the door, you shall plant yourself in ambush near the bar; burst out upon the miscreant like a masked battery; extort a confession at once, and so hang him up by surprise.

Hon. Yes; but I would not choose to exercise too much severity. It is my maxim, sir, that crimes generally punish themselves.

Cro. Well, but we may upbraid him a little, I suppose? [*Ironically.*

Hon. Ay, but not punish him too rigidly.

Cro. Well, well, leave that to my own benevolence.

Hon. Well, I do: but remember that universal benevolence is the first law of nature.

[*Exeunt* HONEYWOOD *and Mrs* CROAKER.

Cro. Yes; and my universal benevolence will hang the dog, if he had as many necks as a hydra. [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*An Inn.*

Enter OLIVIA *and* JARVIS.

Oliv. Well, we have got safe to the inn, however. Now, if the post-chaise were ready——

Jar. The horses are just finishing their oats; and, as they are not going to be married, they choose to take their own time.

Oliv. You are for ever giving wrong motives to my impatience.

Jar. Be as impatient as you will, the horses must take their own time; besides, you don't consider we have got no answer from our fellow-traveller yet. If we hear nothing from Mr Leontine, we have only one way left us.

Oliv. What way?

Jar. The way home again.

Oliv. Not so. I have made a resolution to go, and nothing shall induce me to break it.

Jar. Ay, resolutions are well kept when they jump with inclination. However, I'll go hasten things without. And I'll call too at the bar to see if any things should be left for us there. Don't be in such a plaguy hurry, madam, and we shall go the faster, I promise you. [*Exit* JARVIS.

Enter Landlady.

Land. What! Solomon; why don't you move? Pipes and tobacco for the Lamb there.——Will nobody answer? To the Dolphin; quick. The Angel has been outrageous this half hour. Did your ladyship call, madam?

Oliv. No, madam.

Land. I find, as you're for Scotland, madam—But that's no business of mine; married, or not married, I ask no questions. To be sure, we had a sweet little couple set off from this two days ago for the same place. The gentleman, for a tailor, was, to be sure, as fine a spoken tailor as ever blew froth from a full pot, and the young lady so bashful, it was near half an hour before we could get her to finish a pint of raspberry between us.

Oliv. But this gentleman and I are not going to be married, I assure you.

Land. May be not. That's no business of mine; for certain, Scotch marriages seldom turn out. There was, of my own knowledge, Miss Macfag, that married her father's footman.—Alack-a-day! she and her husband soon parted, and now keep separate cellars in Hedge-lane.

Oliv. A very pretty picture of what lies before me! [*Aside.*

Enter LEONTINE.

Leo. My dear Olivia, my anxiety till you were out of danger was too great to be resisted. I could not help coming to see you set out, though it exposes us to a discovery.

Oliv. May every thing you do prove as fortunate. Indeed, Leontine, we have been most cruelly disappointed. Mr Honeywood's bill upon the city has, it seems, been protested, and we have been utterly at a loss how to proceed.

Leo. How! An offer of his own too. Sure, he could not mean to deceive us.

Oliv. Depend upon his sincerity; he only mistook the desire for the power of serving us. But let us think no more of it. I believe the post-chaise is ready by this.

Land. Not quite yet: and, begging your ladyship's pardon, I don't think your ladyship quite ready for the post-chaise. The north road is a cold place, madam. I have a drop in the house of as pretty raspberry as ever was tipt over tongue. Just a thimble-full to keep the wind off your stomach. To be sure, the last couple we had here, they said it was a perfect nosegay. Ecod, I sent them both away as good-natured—Up went the blinds, round went the wheels, and drive away, ost-boy, was the word.

Enter CROAKER.

Cro. Well, while my friend Honeywood is upon the post of danger at the bar, it must be my business to have an eye about me here. I think I know an incendiary's look; for, wherever the devil makes a purchase, he never fails to set his mark. Ha! who have we here? My son and daughter! What can they be doing here?

Land. I tell you, madam, it will do you good; I think I know by this time what's good for the north road. It's a raw night, madam.—Sir—

Leo. Not a drop more, good madam. I should now take it as a greater favour if you hasten the horses, for I am afraid to be seen myself.

Land. That shall be done. Wha, Solomon! are you all dead there? Wha, Solomon, I say.

[*Exit bawling.*

Oliv. Well, I dread least an expedition begun in fear should end in repentance. Every moment we stay increases our danger, and adds to my apprehensions.

Leo. There's no danger, trust me, my dear; there can be none: if Honeywood has acted with honour, and kept my father, as he promised, in employment till we are out of danger, nothing can interrupt our journey.

Oliv. I have no doubt of Mr Honeywood's sincerity, and even his desires to serve us. My fears are from your father's suspicions. A mind so disposed to be alarmed without a cause, will be but too ready when there's a reason.

Leo. Why, let him, when we are out of his power. But, believe me, Olivia, you have no great reason to dread his resentment. His re-

pining temper, as it does no manner of injury to himself, so will it never do harm to others. He only frets to keep himself employed, and scolds for his private amusement.

Oliv. I don't know that; but am sure, on some occasions, it makes him look most shockingly.

Cro. [*Discovering himself.*] How does he look now?—How does he look now?

Oliv. Ah!

Leo. Undone!

Cro. How do I look now? Sir, I am your very humble servant. Madam, I am yours. What, you are going off, are you? Then, first, if you please, take a word or two from me with you before you go. Tell me first where you are going? and when you have told me that, perhaps, I shall know as little as I did before.

Leo. If that be so, our answer might but increase your displeasure, without adding to your information.

Cro. I want no information from you, puppy: and you too, good madam, what answer have you got? Eh, [*A cry without, stop him!*] I think I heard a noise. My friend, Honeywood, without—has he seized the incendiary? Ah, no, for now I hear no more on't.

Leo. Honeywood without! Then, sir, it was Mr Honeywood that directed you hither?

Cro. No, sir, it was Mr Honeywood conducted me hither.

Leo. Is it possible?

Cro. Possible! Why, he's in the house now, sir. More anxious about me than my own son, sir.

Leo. Then, sir, he's a villain.

Cro. How, sirrah! a villain, because he takes most care of your father? I'll not bear it. I tell you I'll not bear it. Honeywood is a friend to the family, and I'll have him treated as such.

Leo. I shall study to repay his friendship as it deserves.

Cro. Ah, rogue, if you knew how earnestly he entered into my griefs, and pointed out the means to detect them, you would love him as I do. [*A cry without, stop him!*] Fire and fury! they have seized the incendiary: they have the villain, the incendiary in view. Stop him, stop an incendiary, a murderer; stop him! [*Exit.*

Oliv. Oh, my terrors! What can this new tumult mean?

Leo. Some new mark, I suppose, of Mr Honeywood's sincerity. But we shall have satisfaction: he shall give me instant satisfaction.

Oliv. It must not be, my Leontine, if you value my esteem, or my happiness. Whatever be our fate, let us not add guilt to our misfortunes—Consider that our innocence will shortly be all we have left us. You must forgive him.

Leo. Forgive him! Has he not in every instance betrayed us? Forced me to borrow money from him, which appears a mere trick to delay us: promised to keep my father engaged till we were out of danger, and here brought him to the very scene of our escape!

Oliv. Don't be precipitate. We may yet be mistaken.

Enter Post-Boy, dragging in JARVIS: HONEYWOOD *entering soon after.*

Post. Ay, master, we have him fast enough. Here is the incendiary dog. I'm entitled to the reward; I'll take my oath I saw him ask for the money at the bar, and then run for it.

Hon. Come, bring him along. Let us see him. Let him learn to blush for his crimes. [*Discovering his mistake.*] Death! what's here! Jarvis, Leontine, Olivia! What can all this mean?

Jar. Why, I'll tell you what it means: that I was an old fool, and that you are my master—that's all.

Hon. Confusion!

Leo. Yes, sir, I find you have kept your word with me. After such baseness, I wonder how you can venture to see the man you have injured.

Hon. My dear Leontine, by my life, my honour—

Leo. Peace, peace, for shame! and do not continue to aggravate baseness by hypocrisy. I know you, sir, I know you.

Hon. Why, won't you hear me? By all that's just, I knew not——

Leo. Hear you, sir! to what purpose? I now see through all your low arts; your ever complying with every opinion; your never refusing any request; your friendship as common as a prostitute's favours, and as fallacious; all these, sir, have long been contemptible to the world, and are now perfectly so to me.

Hon. Ha! contemptible to the world! That reaches me. [*Aside.*

Leo. All the seeming sincerity of your professions I now find were only allurements to betray; and all your seeming regret for their consequences only calculated to cover the cowardice of your heart. Draw, villain!

Enter CROAKER, *out of Breath.*

Cro. Where is the villain? Where is the incendiary? [*Seizing the Post-Boy.*] Hold him fast, the dog: he has the gallows in his face. Come, you dog, confess; confess all, and hang yourself.

Post. Zounds, master! what do you throttle me for?

Cro. [*Beating him.*] Dog, do you resist; do you resist?

Post. Zounds, master! I'm not he; there's the man that we thought was the rogue, and turns out to be one of the company.

Cro. How!

Hon. Mr Croaker, we have all been under a strange mistake here; I find there is nobody guilty; it was all an error; entirely an error of our own.

Cro. And I say, sir, that you're in an error; for there's guilt and double guilt, a plot, a damn'd jesuitical pestilential plot, and I must have proof of it.

Hon. Do but hear me.

Cro. What, you intend to bring 'em off, I suppose; I'll hear nothing.

Hon. Madam, you seem at least calm enough to hear reason.

Oliv. Excuse me.

Hon. Good Jarvis, let me then explain it to you.

Jar. What signifies explanations, when the thing is done?

Hon. Will nobody hear me? Was there ever such a set, so blinded by passion and prejudice? [*To the Post-boy.*] My good friend, I believe you'll be surprised when I assure you——

Post. Sure me nothing—I'm sure of nothing but a good beating.

Cro. Come then, you, madam, if you ever hope for any favour or forgiveness, tell me sincerely all you know of this affair.

Oliv. Unhappily, sir, I'm but too much the cause of your suspicions: you see before you, sir, one that, with false pretences, has stept into your family to betray it: not your daughter———

Cro. Not my daughter!

Oliv. Not your daughter, but a mean deceiver —who—support me—I cannot———

Hon. Help! she's going; give her air.

Cro. Ay, ay, take the young woman to the air; I would not hurt a hair of her head, whose ever daughter she may be—not so bad as that neither.

[*Exeunt all but* CROAKER.

Cro. Yes, yes, all's out; I now see the whole affair: my son is either married, or going to be so, to this lady, whom he imposed upon me as his sister. Ay, certainly so; and yet I don't find it afflicts me so much as one might think. There's the advantage of fretting away our misfortunes beforehand, we never feel them when they come.

Enter Miss RICHLAND *and Sir* WILLIAM.

Sir Wil. But how do you know, madam, that my nephew intends setting off from this place?

Miss Rich. My maid assured me he was come to this inn, and my own knowledge of his intending to leave the kingdom, suggested the rest. But what do I see, my guardian here before us! Who, my dear sir, could have expected meeting you here? To what accident do we owe this pleasure?

Cro. To a fool, I believe.

Miss Rich. But to what purpose did you come?

Cro. To play the fool.

Miss Rich. But with whom?

Cro. With greater fools than myself.

Miss Rich. Explain.

Cro Why, Mr Honeywood brought me here, to do nothing now I am here; and my son is going to be married to I don't know who that is here; so now you are as wise as I am.

Miss Rich. Married! to whom, sir?

Cro. To Olivia; my daughter, as I took her to be; but who the devil she is, or whose daughter she is, I know no more than the man in the moon.

Sir Wil. Then, sir, I can inform you; and, tho' a stranger, yet you shall find me a friend to your family: it will be enough at present to assure you, that, both in point of birth and fortune, the young lady is at least your son's equal. Being left by her father, Sir James Woodville—

Cro. Sir James Woodville! What, of the West?

Sir Wil. Being left by him, I say, to the care of a mercenary wretch, whose only aim was to secure her fortune to himself, she was sent into France, under pretence of education; and there every art was tried to fix her for life in a convent, contrary to her inclinations. Of this I was informed upon my arrival at Paris; and, as I had been once her father's friend, I did all in my power to frustrate her guardian's base intentions. I had even meditated to rescue her from his authority, when your son stept in with more pleasing violence, gave her liberty, and you a daughter.

Cro. But I intend to have a daughter of my own choosing, sir: a young lady, sir, whose fortune, by my interest with those that have interest, will be double what my son has a right to expect. Do you know Mr Lofty, sir?

Sir Wil. Yes, sir; and know that you are deceived in him. But step this way, and I'll convince you.

[CROAKER *and Sir* WILLIAM *seem to confer.*

Enter HONEYWOOD.

Hon. Obstinate man, still to persist in his outrage! Insulted by him, despised by all, I now begin to grow contemptible, even to myself. How have I sunk by too great an assiduity to please! How have I overtax'd all my abilities, lest the approbation of a single fool should escape me! But all is now over; I have survived my reputation, my fortune, my friendships, and nothing remains henceforward for me but solitude and repentance.

Miss Rich. Is it true, Mr Honeywood, that you are setting off, without taking leave of your friends? The report is, that you are quitting England. Can it be?

Hon. Yes, madam; and tho' I am so unhappy as to have fallen under your displeasure, yet, thank Heaven, I leave you to happiness; to one who loves you, and deserves your love; to one who has power to procure you affluence, and generosity to improve your enjoyment of it.

Miss Rich. And are you sure, sir, that the gentleman you mean is what you describe him?

Hon. I have the best assurances of it—his serving me. He does indeed deserve the highest happiness, and that is in your power to confer. As for me, weak and wavering as I have been, obliged by all, and incapable of serving any, what happiness can I find but in solitude? What hope but in being forgotten?

Miss Rich. A thousand! to live among friends that esteem you, whose happiness it will be to be permitted to oblige you.

Hon. No, madam, my resolution is fix'd. Inferiority among strangers is easy: but among those that once were equals, insupportable. Nay, to shew you how far my resolution can go, I can now speak with calmness of my former follies, my vanity, my dissipation, my weakness. I will even confess, that, among the number of my other presumptions, I had the insolence to think of loving you. Yes, madam, while I was pleading the passion of another, my heart was tortured with its own. But it is over, it was unworthy our friendship, and let it be forgotten.

Miss Rich. You amaze me!

Hon. But you'll forgive it, I know you will, since the confession should not have come from

me even now, but to convince you of the sincerity of my intention of—never mentioning it more. [*Going.*

Miss Rich. Stay, sir, one moment—Ha! he here—

Enter LOFTY.

Lof. Is the coast clear? None but friends. I have followed you here with a trifling piece of intelligence: but it goes no farther; things are not yet ripe for a discovery. I have spirits working at a certain board; your affair at the treasury will be done in less than——a thousand years. Mum!

Miss Rich. Sooner, sir, I should hope.

Lof. Why, yes, I believe it may, if it falls into proper hands, that know where to push and where to parry; that know how the land lies—eh, Honeywood?

Miss Rich. It is fallen into yours.

Lof. Well, to keep you no longer in suspense, your thing is done. It is done, I say—that's all. I have just had assurances from Lord Neverout, that the claim has been examined, and found admissible. *Quietus* is the word, madam.

Hon. But how! his lordship has been at Newmarket these ten days.

Lof. Indeed! then Sir Gilbert Goose must have been most damnably mistaken. I had it of him.

Miss Rich. He! why Sir Gilbert and his family have been in the country this month.

Lof. This month! it must certainly be so—Sir Gilbert's letter did come to me from Newmarket, so that he must have met his lordship there; and so it came about.—I have his letter about me; I'll read it to you.—[*Taking out a large bundle.*]——That's from Paoli of Corsica, that from the Marquis of Squilachi —Have you a mind to see a letter from Count Poniatowski, now king of Poland?—Honest Pon—[*Searching.*]—O, sir, what are you here too?—I'll tell you what, honest friend, if you have not absolutely delivered my letter to Sir William Honeywood, you may return it. The thing will do without him.

Sir Wil. Sir, I have delivered it, and must inform you, it was received with the most mortifying contempt.

Cro. Contempt! Mr Lofty, what can that mean?

Lof. Let him go on, let him go on, I say. You'll find it come to something presently.

Sir Wil. Yes, sir, I believe you'll be amazed, if, after waiting some time in the anti-chamber, after being surveyed with insolent curiosity by the passing servants, I was at last assured, that Sir William Honeywood knew no such person, and I must certainly have been imposed upon.

Lof. Good; let me die, very good. Ha, ha, ha!

Cro. Now, for my life, I cann't find out half the goodness of it.

Lof. You cann't? Ha, ha!

Cro. No, for the soul of me; I think it was as confounded a bad answer, as ever was sent from one private gentleman to another.

Lof. And so you cann't find out the force of the message? Why, I was in the house at that very time. Ha, ha! It was I that sent that very answer to my own letter. Ha, ha!

Cro. Indeed! How! Why!

Lof. In one word, things between Sir William and me must be behind the curtain. A party has many eyes. He sides with Lord Buzzard, I side with Sir Gilbert Goose. So that unriddles the mystery.

Cro. And so it does indeed, and all my suspicions are over.

Lof. Your suspicions!—What then you have been suspecting, you have been suspecting, have you? Mr Croaker, you and I were friends, we are friends no longer. Never talk to me. It's over; I say, it's over.

Cro. As I hope for your favour, I did not mean to offend. It escaped me. Don't be discomposed.

Lof. Zounds, sir, but I am discomposed, and will be discomposed! To be treated thus!—Who am I?—Was it for this I have been dreaded both by ins and outs?—Have I been libelled in the Gazetteer, and praised in the St James's? have I been chaired at Wildman's, and a speaker at Merchant Tailors' Hall? have I had my hand to addresses, and my head in the print shops, and talk to me of suspects?

Cro. My dear sir, be pacified. What can you have but asking pardon?

Lof. Sir, I will not be pacified——Suspects! Who am I? To be used thus, have I paid court to men in favour to serve my friends, the lords of the treasury, Sir William Honeywood, and the rest of the gang, and talk to me of suspects!—Who am I, I say, who am I?

Sir Wil. Since, sir, you're so pressing for an answer, I'll tell you who you are. A gentleman as well acquainted with politics, as with men in power; as well acquainted with persons of fashion, as with modesty; with lords of the treasury, as with truth; and with all, as you are with Sir William Honeywood. I am Sir William Honeywood. [*Discovering his ensigns of the Bath.*

Cro. Sir William Honeywood!

Hon. Astonishment! my uncle! [*Aside.*

Lof. So then my confounded genius has been all this time only leading me up to the garret, in order to fling me out of the window.

Cro. What, Mr Importance, and are these your works? Suspect you! You, who have been dreaded by the ins and outs: you, who have had your hand to addresses, and your head stuck up in print-shops. If you were served right, you should have your head stuck up in the pillory.

Lof. Ay, stick it where you will, for, by the Lord, it cuts but a very poor figure where it sticks at present.

Sir Wil. Well, Mr Croaker, I hope you now see how incapable this gentleman is of serving you, and how little Miss Richland has to expect from his influence.

Cro. Ay, sir, too well I see it, and I cann't but say I have had some boding of it these ten days. So I'm resolved, since my son has placed his af-

fections on a lady of moderate fortune, to be satisfied with his choice, and not run the hazard of another Mr Lofty in helping him to a better.

Sir Wil. I approve your resolution, and here they come, to receive a confirmation of your pardon and consent.

Enter Mrs CROAKER, JARVIS, LEONTINE, *and* OLIVIA.

Mrs Cro. Where's my husband?——Come, come, lovey, you must forgive them. Jarvis here, has been to tell me the whole affair; and, I say, you must forgive them. Our own was a stolen match, you know, my dear; and we never had any reason to repent of it.

Cro. I wish we could both say so: however, this gentleman, Sir William Honeywood, has been beforehand with you, in obtaining their pardon. So, if the two poor fools have a mind to marry, I think we can tack them together without crossing the Tweed for it. [*Joining their hands.*

Leo. How blest, and unexpected! What, what can we say to such goodness! But our future obedience shall be the best reply. And, as for this gentleman, to whom we owe——

Sir Wil. Excuse me, sir, if I interrupt your thanks, as I have here an interest that calls me. [*Turning to* HONEYWOOD.] Yes, sir, you are surprised to see me; and I own that a desire of correcting your follies led me hither. I saw, with indignation, the errors of a mind that only sought applause from others; that easiness of disposition, which, tho' inclined to the right, had not courage to condemn the wrong. I saw with regret those splendid errors, that still took name from some neighbouring duty. Your charity, that was but injustice; your benevolence, that was but weakness; and your friendship but credulity. I saw, with regret, great talents and extensive learning only employed to add sprightliness to error, and increase your perplexities. I saw your mind with a thousand natural charms: but the greatness of its beauty served only to heighten my pity for its prostitution.

Hon. Cease to upbraid me, sir; I have for some time but too strongly felt the justice of your reproaches. But there is one way still left me: Yes, sir, I have determined this very hour to quit for ever a place where I have made myself the voluntary slave of all; and to seek among strangers that fortitude which may give strength to the mind, and marshal all its dissipated virtues. Yet, ere I depart, permit me to solicit favour for this gentleman; who, notwithstanding what has happened, has laid me under the most signal obligations. Mr Lofty———

Lof. Mr Honeywood, I'm resolved upon a reformation, as well as you. I now begin to find, that the man who first invented the art of speaking truth was a much cunninger fellow than I thought him. And, to prove that I design to speak truth for the future, I must now assure you, that you owe your late enlargement to another; as, upon my soul, I had no hand in the matter. So now, if any of the company has a mind for preferment, he may take my place—I'm determined to resign. [*Exit.*

Hon. How have I been deceived!

Sir Wil. No, sir, you have been obliged to a kinder, fairer friend for that favour—To Miss Richland. Would she complete our joy, and make the man she has honoured by her friendship happy in her love, I should then forget all, and be as blest as the welfare of my dearest kinsman can make me.

Miss Rich. After what is past, it would be but affectation to pretend to indifference. Yes, I will own an attachment, which, I find, was more than friendship. And if my entreaties cannot alter his resolution to quit the country, I will even try if my hand has not power to detain him. [*Giving her hand.*

Hon. Heavens! how can I have deserved all this! How express my happiness, my gratitude! A moment, like this, overpays an age of apprehension.

Cro. Well, now I see content in every face; but Heaven send we be all better this day three months.

Sir Wil. Henceforth, nephew, learn to respect yourself. He who seeks only for applause from without, has all his happiness in another's keeping.

Hon. Yes, sir, I now too plainly perceive my errors. My vanity, in attempting to please all, by fearing to offend any; my meanness in approving folly, lest fools should disapprove. Henceforth, therefore, it shall be my study to reserve my pity for real distress; my friendship for true merit; and my love for her, who first taught me what it is to be happy. [*Exeunt.*

EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MRS BULKLEY.

As puffing quacks some caitiff wretch procure
To swear the pill, or drop, has wrought a cure;
Thus on the stage, our play-wrights still depend
For Epilogues and Prologues on some friend,
Who knows each art of coaxing up the town,
And make full many a bitter pill go down.
Conscious of this, our bard has gone about,
And teased each rhyming friend to help him out.
An Epilogue,—things cann't go on without it;
It could not fail, would you but set about it.
Young man, cries one (a bard laid up in clover)
Alas, young man, my writing days are over;
Let boys play tricks, and kick the straw, not I;
Your brother doctor there, perhaps, may try.
What I! dear sir, the doctor interposes;
What, plant my thistle, sir, among his roses!
No, no, I've other contests to maintain;
To-night I head our troops at Warwick-lane.
Go, ask your manager—Who, me! Your pardon;
Those things are not our forte at Covent-Garden.
Our author's friends, thus placed at happy distance,
Give him good words indeed, but no assistance.
As some unhappy wight, at some new play,
At the pit-door stands elbowing away,
While oft, with many a smile, and many a shrug,
He eyes the centre, where his friends sit snug,
His simpering friends, with pleasure in their eyes,
Sink as he sinks, and as he rises rise:
He nods, they nod; he cringes, they grimace;
But not a soul will budge to give him place.
Since then, unhelp'd, our bard must now conform
To 'bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
Blame where you must, be candid where you can,
And be each critic the Good-Natured Man.

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER;

OR

THE MISTAKES OF A NIGHT.

BY

GOLDSMITH.

PROLOGUE.

BY DAVID GARRICK, ESQ.

Enter Mr WOODWARD, *dressed in Black, and holding a Handkerchief to his Eyes.*

EXCUSE me, sirs, I pray—I cann't yet speak—
I'm crying now—and have been all the week!
'Tis not alone this mourning suit, good masters;
I've that within—for which there are no plasters!
Pray would you know the reason why I'm crying?
The Comic Muse, long sick, is now a-dying!
And if she goes, my tears will never stop:
For, as a player, I cann't squeeze out one drop:
I am undone, that's all—shall lose my bread—
I'd rather—but that's nothing—lose my head.
When the sweet maid is laid upon the bier,
Shuter and I shall be chief mourners here.
To her a mawkish drab of spurious breed,
Who deals in sentimentals, will succeed!
Poor Ned and I are dead to all intents,
We can as soon speak Greek as sentiments!
Both nervous grown, to keep our spirits up,
We now and then take down a hearty cup.
What shall we do?—If Comedy forsake us,
They'll turn us out, and no one else will take us.
But why cann't I be moral?—Let me try—
My heart thus pressing—fix'd my face and eye—
With a sententious look, that nothing means,
(Faces are blocks, in sentimental scenes,)
Thus I begin—All is not gold that glitters,
Pleasure seems sweet, but proves a glass of bitters.
When ign'rance enters, folly is at hand;
Learning is better far than house or land.
Let not your virtue trip; who trips may stumble,
And virtue is not virtue, if she tumble.
I give it up—Morals won't do for me:
To make you laugh I must play tragedy.
One hope remains—Hearing the maid was ill,
A doctor comes this night to shew his skill.
To cheer her heart, and give your muscles motion,
He, in five draughts prepared, presents a potion:
A kind of magic charm—for, be assured,
If you will swallow it, the maid is cured;
But desp'rate the doctor, and her case is,
If you reject the dose, and make wry faces!
This truth he boasts, will boast it while he lives,
No pois'nous drugs are mixed with what he gives:
Should he succeed, you'll give him his degree;
If not, within he will receive no fee!
The college you, must his pretensions back,
Pronounce him regular, or dub him quack.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Sir CHARLES MARLOW.
Young MARLOW.
HARDCASTLE.
HASTINGS.
TONY LUMPKIN.
DIGGORY.

Landlord, Servants, &c. &c.

WOMEN.

Mrs HARDCASTLE.
Miss HARDCASTLE.
Miss NEVILLE.
Maid.

SCENE,—*London.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Chamber in an old-fashioned House.*

Enter Mrs HARDCASTLE, *and Mr* HARDCASTLE.

Mrs Hard. I vow, Mr Hardcastle, you're very particular. Is there a creature in the whole country, but ourselves, that does not take a trip to town now and then to rub off the rust a little? There's the two Miss Hoggs, and our neighbour, Mrs Grigsby, go to take a month's polishing every winter.

Hard. Ay, and bring back vanity and affectation to last them the whole year. I wonder why London cannot keep its own fools at home. In my time, the follies of the town crept slowly among us, but now they travel faster than a stage-coach. Its fopperies come down, not only as inside passengers, but in the very basket.

Mrs Hard. Ay, your times were fine times, indeed: you have been telling us of them for many a long year. Here we live in an old rumbling mansion, that looks for all the world like an inn, but that we never see company. Our best visitors are old Mrs Oddfish, the curate's wife, and little Cripplegate, the lame dancing-master; and all our entertainment, your old stories of Prince Eugene and the duke of Marlborough. I hate such old-fashioned trumpery.

Hard. And I love it. I love every thing that's old: old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine; and, I believe, Dorothy, [*Taking her hand.*] you'll own I have been pretty fond of an old wife.

Mrs Hard. Lord, Mr Hardcastle, you're for ever at your Dorothy's and your old wife's. You may be a Darby, but I'll be no Joan, I promise you. I'm not so old as you'd make me by more than one good year. Add twenty to twenty, and make money of that.

Hard. Let me see; twenty added to twenty, makes just fifty and seven.

Mrs Hard. It's false, Mr Hardcastle: I was but twenty when I was brought to bed of Tony, that I had by Mr Lumpkin, my first husband; and he's not come to years of discretion yet.

Hard. Nor ever will, I dare answer for him. Ay, you have taught him finely.

Mrs Hard. No matter, Tony Lumpkin has a good fortune. My son is not to live by his learning. I don't think a boy wants much learning to spend fifteen hundred a year.

Hard. Learning, quotha? a mere composition of tricks and mischief.

Mrs Hard. Humour, my dear; nothing but humour. Come, Mr Hardcastle, you must allow the boy a little humour.

Hard. I'd sooner allow him a horse-pond. If burning the footmen's shoes, frighting the maids, worrying the kittens, be humour, he has it. It was but yesterday he fastened my wig to the back of my chair, and when I went to make a bow, I popt my bald head in Mrs Frizzle's face.

Mrs Hard. And am I to blame? The poor boy was always too sickly to do any good. A school would be his death. When he comes to be a little stronger, who knows what a year or two's Latin may do for him?

Hard. Latin for him! A cat and a fiddle. No, no, the ale-house and the stable are the only schools he'll ever go to.

Mrs Hard, Well, we must not snub the poor boy now, for I believe we sha'n't have him long among us. Any body that looks in his face may see he's consumptive.

Hard. Ay, if growing too fat be one of the symptoms.

Mrs Hard. He coughs sometimes.

Hard. Yes, when his liquor goes the wrong way.

Mrs Hard. I'm actually afraid of his lungs.

Hard. And truly so am I; for he sometimes whoops like a speaking trumpet—[TONY *hallooing behind the scenes.*]—O there he goes—A very consumptive figure, truly.

Enter TONY, *crossing the Stage.*

Mrs Hard. Tony, where are you going, my charmer? Won't you give papa andI a little of your company, lovee?

Tony. I'm in haste, mother, I cannot stay.

Mrs Hard. You sha'n't venture out this raw evening, my dear: You look most shockingly.

Tony. I cann't stay, I tell you. The Three Pigeons expects me down every moment. There's some fun going forward.

Hard. Ay; the ale-house, the old place: I thought so.

Mrs Hard. A low, paltry, set of fellows.

Tony. Not so low neither. There's Dick Muggins the exciseman, Jack Slang the horse-doctor, little Aminadab that grinds the music box, and Tom Twist that spins the pewter platter.

Mrs Hard. Pray, my dear, disappoint them for one night at least.

Tony. As for disappointing them, I should not so much mind, but I cann't abide to disappoint myself.

Mrs Hard. [*Detaining him.*] You sha'n't go.

Tony. I will, I tell you.

Mrs Hard. I say you sha'n't.

Tony. We'll see which is strongest, you or I. [*Exit, hawling her out.*

Hard. Ay, there goes a pair that only spoil each other. But is not the whole age in a combination to drive sense and discretion out of doors? There's my pretty darling Kate; the fashions of the times have almost infected her too. By living a year or two in town, she is as fond of gauze, and French frippery, as the best of them.

Enter Miss HARDCASTLE.

Hard. Blessings on my pretty innocence! Drest out as usual, my Kate. Goodness! what a quantity of superfluous silk hast thou got about thee, girl! I could never teach the fools of this age, that the indigent world could be cloathed out of the trimmings of the vain.

Miss Hard. You know our agreement, sir. You allow me the morning to receive and pay visits, and to dress in my own manner, and in the evening I put on my housewife's dress to please you.

Hard. Well, remember I insist on the terms of our agreement; and, by the bye, I believe I shall have occasion to try your obedience this very evening.

Miss Hard. I protest, Sir, I don't comprehend your meaning.

Hard. Then, to be plain with you, Kate, I expect the young gentleman I have chosen to be your husband from town this very day. I have his father's letter, in which he informs me his son is set out, and that he intends to follow himself shortly after.

Miss Hard. Indeed! I wish I had known something of this before. Bless me, how shall I behave? It's a thousand to one I sha'n't like him; our meeting will be so formal, and so like a thing of business, that I shall find no room for friendship or esteem.

Hard. Depend upon it, child, I'll never controul your choice; but Mr Marlow, whom I have pitched upon, is the son of my old friend, Sir Charles Marlow, of whom you have heard me talk so often. The young gentleman has been bred a scholar, and is designed for an employment in the service of his country. I am told he's a man of an excellent understanding.

Miss Hard. Is he?

Hard. Very generous.

Miss Hard. I believe I shall like him.

Hard. Young and brave.

Miss Hard. I'm sure I shall like him.

Hard. And very handsome.

Miss Hard. My dear papa, say no more; [*Kissing his hand.*] he's mine, I'll have him.

Hard. And, to crown all, Kate, he's one of the most bashful and reserved young fellows in all the world.

Miss Hard. Eh! you have frozen me to death again. That word reserved, has undone all the rest of his accomplishments. A reserved lover, it is said, always makes a suspicious husband.

Hard. On the contrary, modesty seldom resides in a breast that is not enriched with nobler virtues. It was the very feature in his character that first struck me.

Miss Hard. He must have more striking features to catch me, I promise you. However, if he be so young, so handsome, and so every thing, as you mention, I believe he'll do still. I think I'll have him.

Hard. Ay, Kate, but there is still an obstacle. It's more than an even wager he may not have you.

Miss Hard. My dear papa, why will you mortify one so?—Well, if he refuses, instead of breaking my heart at his indifference, I'll only break my glass for its flattery; set my cap to some newer fashion, and look out for some less difficult admirer.

Hard. Bravely resolved! In the mean time I'll go prepare the servants for his reception; as we seldom see company, they want as much training as a company of recruits, the first day's muster. [*Exit.*

Miss Hard. Lud, this news of papa's puts me all in a flutter. Young, handsome; these he put last; but I put them foremost. Sensible, good-natured; I like all that. But then reserved and sheepish, that's much against him. Yet cann't he be cured of his timidity, by being taught to be proud of his wife? Yes, and cann't I—But I vow I'm disposing of the husband, before I have secured the lover.

Enter Miss NEVILLE.

Miss Hard. I'm glad you're come, Neville, my dear. Tell me, Constance, how do I look this

evening? Is there any thing whimsical about me? Is it one of my well-looking days, child? Am I in face to-day?

Miss Nev. Perfectly, my dear. Yet now I look again—bless me!—sure no accident has happened among the canary birds or the gold fishes! Has your brother or the cat been meddling? Or has the last novel been too moving?

Miss Hard. No; nothing of all this. I have been threatened—I can scarce get it out——I have been threatened with a lover.

Miss Nev. And his name———

Miss Hard. Is Marlow.

Miss Nev. Indeed!

Miss Hard. The son of Sir Charles Marlow.

Miss Nev. As I live, the most intimate friend of Mr Hastings, my admirer. They are never asunder. I believe you must have seen him when we lived in town.

Miss Hard. Never.

Miss Nev. He's a very singular character, I assure you. Among women of reputation and virtue, he is the modestest man alive; but his acquaintance give him a very different character among creatures of another stamp: you understand me?

Miss Hard. An odd character, indeed. I shall never be able to manage him. What shall I do? Pshaw! think no more of him, but trust to occurrences for success. But how goes on your own affair, my dear; has my mother been courting you for my brother Tony as usual?

Miss Nev. I have just come from one of our agreeable tête-a-têtes. She has been saying a hundred tender things, and setting off her pretty monster as the very pink of perfection.

Miss Hard. And her partiality is such, that she actually thinks him so. A fortune like yours is no small temptation. Besides, as she has the sole management of it, I'm not surprised to see her unwilling to let it go out of the family.

Miss Nev. A fortune like mine, which chiefly consists in jewels, is no such mighty temptation. But at any rate, if my dear Hastings be but constant, I make no doubt to be too hard for her at last. However, I let her suppose that I am in love with her son, and she never once dreams that my affections are fixed upon another.

Miss Hard. My good brother holds out stoutly. I could almost love him for hating you so.

Miss Nev. It is a good-natured creature at bottom, and I'm sure would wish to see me married to any body but himself. But my aunt's bell rings for our afternoon's walk round the improvements. Allons! courage is necessary, as our affairs are critical.

Miss Hard. Would it were bed time, and all were well. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*An Alehouse Room.*

Several shabby Fellows, with Punch and Tobacco. TONY *at the head of the Table, a little higher than the rest: A mallet in his hand.*

Om. Hurrea, hurrea, hurrea, bravo!

1st Fel. Now, gentlemen, silence for a song. The 'squire is going to knock himself down for a song.

Om. Ay, a song, a song.

Tony. Then I'll sing you, gentlemen, a song I made upon this alehouse, the Three Pigeons.

SONG.

Let schoolmasters puzzle their brain,
With grammar, and nonsense, and learning;
Good liquor, I stoutly maintain,
Gives Genus *a better discerning.*
Let them brag of their Heathenish Gods,
Their Lethes, their Styxes, and Stygians:
Their Quis, and their Quæs, and their Quods,
They're all but a parcel of Pigeons.
Toroddle, toroddle, Toroll.

When Methodist preachers come down,
A-preaching that drinking is sinful,
I'll wager the rascals a crown,
They always preach best with a skinful.
But when you come down with your pence,
For a slice of their scurvy religion,
I'll leave it to all men of sense,
But you, my good friend, are the Pigeon.
Toroddle, toroddle, Toroll.

Then come, put the jorum about,
And let us be merry and clever,
Our hearts and our liquors are stout,
Here's the Three Jolly Pigeons for ever.
Let some cry up woodcock or hare,
Your bustards, your ducks, and your widgeons;
But of all the birds in the air,
Here's a health to the three Jolly Pigeons.
Toroddle, toroddle, toroll.

Om. Bravo, bravo!

1st Fel. The 'squire has got spunk in him.

2d Fel. I loves to hear him sing, bekeays he never gives us nothing that's low.

3d Fel. O damn any thing that's low. I cannot bear it.

4th Fel. The genteel thing is the genteel thing at any time. If so be that a gentleman bees in a concatenation accordingly.

3d Fel. I like the maxum of it, Master Muggins. What though I am obligated to dance a bear, a man may be a gentleman for all that. May this be my poison if my bear ever dances but to the very genteelest of tunes. Water Parted, or the minute in Ariadne.

2d Fel. What a pity it is the 'squire is not come to his own. It would be well for all the publicans within ten miles round of him.

Tony. Ecod, and so it would, Master Slang. I'd then shew what it was to keep choice of company.

2d Fel. O he takes after his own father for that—To be sure old 'Squire Lumpkin was the finest gentleman I ever set my eyes on. For winding the streight horn, or beating a thicket for a hare, or a wench, he never had his fellow.

It was a saying in the place, that he kept the best horses, dogs, and girls in the whole county.

Tony. Ecod, and when I'm of age, I'll be no bastard, I promise you. I have been thinking of Bett Bouncer and the miller's grey mare to begin with. But come, my boys, drink about and be merry, for you pay no reckoning. Well, Stingo, what's the matter?

Enter Landlord.

Land. There be two gentlemen in a post-chaise at the door. They have lost their way upo' the forest; and they are talking something about Mr Hardcastle.

Tony. As sure as can be, one of them must be the gentleman that's coming down to court my sister. Do they seem to be Londoners?

Land. I believe they may. They look woundily like Frenchmen.

Tony. Then desire them to step this way, and I'll set them right in a twinkling. [*Exit Landlord.*] Gentlemen, as they mayn't be good enough company for you, step down for a moment, and I'll be with you in the squeezing of a lemon.

[*Exeunt Mob.*

Tony. Father-in-law has been calling me whelp and hound this half year. Now, if I pleased, I could be so revenged upon the old grumbletonian! But then I'm afraid—afraid of what? I shall soon be worth fifteen hundred a-year, and let him frighten me out of that if he can.

Enter Landlord, conducting MARLOW *and* HASTINGS.

Mar. What a tedious uncomfortable day have we had of it! We were told it was but forty miles across the country, and we have come above threescore.

Hast. And all, Marlow, from that unaccountable reserve of yours, that would not let us enquire more frequently on the way.

Mar. I own, Hastings, I am unwilling to lay myself under an obligation to every one I meet; and often stand the chance of an unmannerly answer.

Hast. At present, however, we are not likely to receive any answer.

Tony. No offence, gentlemen. But I'm told you have been enquiring for one Mr Hardcastle in these parts. Do you know what part of the country you are in?

Hast. Not in the least, sir, but should thank you for information.

Tony. Nor the way you came?

Hast. No, sir; but if you can inform us——

Tony. Why, gentlemen, if you know neither the road you are going, nor where you are, nor the road you came, the first thing I have to inform you is, that—You have lost your way.

Mar. We wanted no ghost to tell us that.

Tony. Pray, gentlemen, may I be so bold as to ask the place from whence you came?

Mar. That's not necessary towards directing us where we are to go.

Tony. No offence; but question for question is all fair, you know. Pray, gentlemen, is not this same Hardcastle a cross-grained, old-fashioned, whimsical fellow, with an ugly face, a daughter, and a pretty son?

Hast. We have not seen the gentleman, but he has the family you mention.

Tony. The daughter a tall, trapessing, trollopping, talkative maypole——The son a pretty, well-bred, agreeable youth, that every body is fond of?

Mar. Our information differs in this. The daughter is said to be well-bred and beautiful; the son, an awkward booby, reared up and spoiled at his mother's apron-string.

Tony. He-he-hem—Then, gentlemen, all I have to tell you is, that you won't reach Mr Hardcastle's house this night, I believe.

Hast. Unfortunate!

Tony. It's a damn'd long, dark, boggy, dirty, dangerous way. Stingo, tell the gentlemen the way to Mr Hardcastle's; [*Winking upon the Landlord.*] Mr Hardcastle's, of Quagmire Marsh, you understand me?

Land. Master Hardcastle's! Lock-a-daisy, my masters, you're come a deadly deal wrong! When you came to the bottom of the hill, you should have cross'd down Squash-lane.

Mar. Cross down Squash-lane!

Land. Then you were to keep streight forward, till you came to four roads.

Mar. Come to where four roads meet!

Tony. Ay; but you must be sure to take only one of them.

Mar. O sir, you're facetious.

Tony. Then keeping to the right, you are to go sideways till you come upon Crack-skull common: there you must look sharp for the track of the wheel, and go forward, till you come to farmer Murrain's barn. Coming to the farmer's barn, you are to turn to the right, and then to the left, and then to the right about again, till you find out the old mill———

Mar. Zounds, man! we could as soon find out the longitude!

Hast. What's to be done, Marlow?

Mar. This house promises but a poor reception; though perhaps the landlord can accommodate us.

Land. Alack, master! we have but one spare bed in the whole house.

Tony. And, to my knowledge, that's taken up by three lodgers already. [*After a pause, in which the rest seem disconcerted.*] I have hit it. Don't you think, Stingo, our landlady could accommodate the gentlemen by the fire-side, with——— three chairs and a bolster?

Hast. I hate sleeping by the fire-side.

Mar. And I detest your three chairs and a bolster.

Tony. You do, do you?—then let me see—what—if you go on a mile further to the Buck's Head; the old Buck's Head on the hill, one of the best inns in the whole country?

Hast. O ho! so we have escaped an adventure for this night, however.

Land. [*Apart to* TONY.] Sure, you ben't sending them to your father's as an inn, be you?

Tony. Mum, you fool you. Let them find that out. [*To them.*] You have only to keep on streight forward, till you come to a large old house by the road side. You'll see a pair of large horns over the door. That's the sign. Drive up the yard, and call stoutly about you.

Hast Sir, we are obliged to you. The servants cann't miss the way?

Tony. No, no: But I tell you though, the landlord is rich, and going to leave off business; so he wants to be thought a gentleman, saving your presence, he! he! he! He'll be for giving you his company; and ecod, if you mind him, he'll presuade you that his mother was an alderman and his aunt a justice of peace.

Land. A troublesome old blade to be sure; but a keeps as good wines and beds as any in the whole country.

Mar. Well, if he supplies us with these we shall want no further connection. We are to turn to the right, did you say?

Tony. No, no; streight forward. I'll just step myself, and shew you a piece of the way. [*To the Landlord.*] Mum.

Land. Ah, bless your heart, for a sweet, pleasant—damn'd mischievous son of a whore.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An old-fashioned House.*

Enter HARDCASTLE, *followed by three or four awkward Servants.*

Hard. Well, I hope you're perfect in the table exercise I have been teaching you these three days. You all know your posts and your places, and can shew that you have been used to good company, without stirring from home.

Omnes. Ay, ay.

Hard. When company comes, you are not to pop out and stare, and then run in again, like frighted rabbits in a warren.

Omnes. No, no.

Hard. You, Diggory, whom I have taken from the barn, are to make a shew at the side-table; and you, Roger, whom I have advanced from the plough, are to place yourself behind my chair. But you're not to stand so, with your hands in your pockets. Take your hands from your pockets, Roger, and from your head, you blockhead you. See how Diggory carries his hands. They're a little too stiff, indeed, but that's no great matter.

Dig. Ay, mind how I hold them; I learned to hold my hands this way when I was upon drill for the militia. And so being upon drill—

Hard. You must not be so talkative, Diggory. You must be all attention to the guests. You must hear us talk, and not think of talking; you must see us drink, and not think of drinking; you must see us eat, and not think of eating.

Dig. By the laws, your honour, that's parfectly unpossible. Whenever Diggory sees yeating going forwards, ecod he's always wishing for a mouthful himself.

Hard. Blockhead! is not a belly-full in the kitchen as good as a belly-full in the parlour? stay your stomach with that reflection.

Dig. Ecod I thank your worship; I'll make a shift to stay my stomach with a slice of cold beef in the pantry.

Hard. Diggory, you are too talkative. Then, if I happen to say a good thing, or tell a good story, at table, you must not all burst out a-laughing, as if you made part of the company.

Dig. Then ecod your worship must not tell the story of Ould Grouse in the gun room: I cann't help laughing at that—he! he! he!—for the soul of me. We have laughed at that these twenty years—ha! ha! ha!

Hard. Ha! ha! ha! The story is a good one. Well, honest Diggory, you may laugh at that—but still remember to be attentive. Suppose one of the company should call for a glass of wine, how will you behave? A glass of wine, sir, if you please [*To* DIG.]—Eh, why don't you move?

Dig. Ecod, your worship, I never have courage till I see the eatables and drinkables brought upo' the table, and then I am as bauld as a lion.

Hard. What, will nobody move?

1*st Serv.* I'm not to leave this pleace.

2*d Serv.* I'm sure it's no pleace of mine.

3*d Serv.* Nor mine, for sartain.

Dig. Wauns, and I'm sure it canna be mine.

Hard. You numskulls! and so, while, like your betters, you are quarrelling for places, the guests must be starved. O you dunces! I find I must begin all over again.——But don't I hear a coach drive into the yard? To your posts, you blockheads. I'll go in the mean time and give my old friend's son a hearty welcome at the gate.

[*Exit* HARDCASTLE.

Dig. By the elevens, my place is quite gone out of my head.

Rog. I know that my place is to be every where.

1*st Serv.* Where the devil is mine?

2*d Serv.* My pleace is to be no where at all; and so Ize go about my business.

[*Exeunt Servants, running about as if frighted, several ways.*

Enter Servant with Candles, shewing in MARLOW *and* HASTINGS.

Serv. Welcome, gentlemen, very welcome. This way.

Hast. After the disappointments of the day, welcome, once more, Charles, to the comforts of a clean room and a good fire. Upon my word, a very well-looking house; antique but creditable.

Mar. The usual fate of a large mansion. Having first ruined the master by good housekeeping, it at last comes to levy contributions as an inn.

Hast. As you say, we passengers are to be taxed to pay all these fineries. I have often seen a good side-board, or a marble chimney-piece, though not actually put in the bill, inflame the bill confoundedly.

Mar. Travellers, George, must pay in all places. The only difference is, that in good inns, you pay dearly for luxuries; in bad inns, you are fleeced and starved.

Hast. You have lived pretty much among them. In truth, I have been often surprised, that you who have seen so much of the world, with your natural good sense, and your many opportunities, could never yet acquire a requisite share of assurance.

Mar. The Englishman's malady. But tell me, George, where could I have learned that assurance you talk of? My life has been chiefly spent in a college, or an inn, in seclusion from that lovely part of the creation that chiefly teach men confidence. I don't know that I was ever familiarly acquainted with a single modest woman—except my mother—But among females of another class, you know—

Hast. Ay, among them you are impudent enough of all conscience.

Mar. They are of us, you know.

Hast. But in the company of women of reputation I never saw such an idiot, such a trembler; you look for all the world as if you wanted an opportunity of stealing out of the room.

Mar. Why, man, that's because I do want to steal out of the room. Faith, I have often formed a resolution to break the ice, and rattle away at any rate; but, I don't know how, a single glance from a pair of fine eyes has totally overset my resolution. An impudent fellow may counterfeit modesty, but I'll be hanged if a modest man can ever counterfeit impudence.

Hast. If you could but say half the fine things to them that I have heard you lavish upon the bar-maid of an inn, or even a college bed-maker.

Mar. Why, George, I cann't say fine things to them. They freeze, they petrify me They may talk of a comet, or a burning mountain, or some such bagatelle; but to me, a modest woman, drest out in all her finery, is the most tremendous object of the whole creation.

Hast. Ha! ha! ha! At this rate, man, how can you ever expect to marry?

Mar. Never, unless, as among kings and princes, my bride were to be courted by proxy. If, indeed, like an eastern bridegroom, one were to be introduced to a wife he never saw before, it might be endured. But to go through all the terrors of a formal courtship, together with the episode of aunts, grandmothers, and cousins, and at last to blurt out the broad staring question of, Madam, will you marry me? No, no, that's a strain much above me, I assure you.

Hast. I pity you. But how do you intend behaving to the lady you are come down to visit at the request of your father?

Mar. As I behave to all other ladies—bow very low, answer yes, or no, to all her demands—But for the rest, I don't think I shall venture to look in her face, till I see my father's again.

Hast. I'm surprised that one who is so warm a friend can be so cool a lover.

Mar. To be explicit, my dear Hastings, my chief inducement down was to be instrumental in forwarding your happiness, not my own. Miss Neville loves you, the family don't know you; as my friend you are sure of a reception, and let honour do the rest.

Hast. My dear Marlow!—But I'll suppress the emotion. Were I a wretch, meanly seeking to carry off a fortune, you should be the last man in the world I would apply to for assistance; but Miss Neville's person is all I ask, and that is mine, both from her deceased father's consent, and her own inclination.

Mar. Happy man! You have talents and art to captivate any woman. I'm doom'd to adore the sex, and yet to converse with the only part of it I despise. This stammer in my address, and this awkward prepossessing visage of mine, can never permit me to soar above the reach of a milliner's 'prentice, or one of the duchesses of Drury-lane.—Pshaw! this fellow here to interrupt us.

Enter HARDCASTLE.

Hard. Gentlemen, once more you are heartily welcome. Which is Mr Marlow? Sir, you're heartily welcome. It's not my way, you see, to receive my friends with my back to the fire. I like to give them a hearty reception in the old style at my gate. I like to see their horses and trunks taken care of.

Mar. [*Aside.*] He has got our names from the servants already. [*To him.*] We approve your caution and hospitality, sir. [*To* HAST.] I have been thinking, George, of changing our travelling dresses in the morning; I am grown confoundedly ashamed of mine.

Hard. I beg, Mr Marlow, you'll use no ceremony in this house.

Hast. I fancy, George, you're right: the first blow is half the battle. I intend opening the campaign with white and gold.

Hard. Mr Marlow—Mr Hastings—gentlemen—pray be under no restraint in this house. This is Liberty-hall, gentlemen. You may do just as you please here.

Mar. Yet, George, if we open the campaign

too fiercely at first, we may want ammunition before it is over. I think to reserve the embroidery to secure a retreat.

Hard. Your talking of a retreat, Mr Marlow, puts me in mind of the Duke of Marlborough, when he went to besiege Denain. He first summoned the garrison.

Mar. Don't you think the *ventre dor* waistcoat will do with the plain brown?

Hard. He first summoned the garrison, which might consist of five thousand men——

Hast. I think not: brown and yellow mix but very poorly.

Hard. I say, gentlemen, as I was telling you, he summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men.

Mar. The girls like finery.

Hard. Which might consist of about five thousand men, well appointed with stores, ammunition, and other implements of war. Now, says the Duke of Marlborough to George Brooks, I'll pawn my dukedom, says he, but I take that garrison without spilling a drop of blood. So—

Mar. What, my good friend, if you give us a glass of punch in the mean time, it would help us to carry on the siege with vigour.

Hard. Punch, sir! [*Aside.*] This is the most unaccountable kind of modesty I ever met with.

Mar. Yes, sir, punch. A glass of warm punch, after our journey, will be comfortable This is Liberty-hall, you know.

Hard. Here's cup, sir.

Mar. [*Aside.*] So this fellow, in his Liberty-hall, will only let us have just what he pleases.

Hard. [*Taking the cup.*] I hope you'll find it to your mind. I have prepared it with my own hands, and I believe you'll own the ingredients are tolerable. Will you be so good as to pledge me, sir? Here, Mr Marlow, here is to our better acquaintance. [*Drinks.*

Mar. [*Aside.*] A very impudent fellow this! but he's a character; and I'll humour him a little. Sir, my service to you. [*Drinks.*]

Hast. [*Aside.*] I see this fellow wants to give us his company, and forgets that he's an innkeeper before he has learned to be a gentleman.

Mar. From the excellence of your cup, my old friend, I suppose you have a good deal of business in this part of the country? Warm work, now and then at elections, I suppose?

Hard. No, sir, I have long given that work over. Since our betters have hit upon the expedient of electing each other, there's no business for us that sell ale.

Hast. So then you have no turn for politics, I find.

Hard. Not in the least. There was a time, indeed, I fretted myself about the mistakes of government, like other people; but, finding myself every day grow more angry, and the government growing no better, I left it to mend itself. Since that, I no more trouble my head about Heyder Ally, or Ally Cawn, than about Ally Croaker. Sir, my service to you.

Hast. So that, with eating above stairs, and drinking below, with receiving your friends within, and amusing them without, you lead a good pleasant bustling life of it.

Hard. I do stir about a good deal, that's certain. Half the differences of the parish are adjusted in this very parlour.

Mar. [*After drinking.*] And you have an argument in your cup, old gentleman, better than any in Wesminster-hall.

Hard. Ay, young gentleman, that, and a little philosophy.

Mar. [*Aside.*] Well, this is the first time I ever heard of an innkeeper's philosophy!

Hast. So then, like an experienced general, you attack them on every quarter. If you find their reason manageable, you attack it with your philosophy; if you find they have no reason, you attack them with this. Here's your health, my philosopher. [*Drinks.*

Hard. Good, very good, thank you; ha! ha! Your generalship puts me in mind of Prince Eugene, when he fought the Turks at the battle of Belgrade. You shall hear.

Mar. Instead of the battle of Belgrade, I think it's almost time to talk about supper. What has your philosophy got in the house for supper?

Hard. For supper, sir! [*Aside.*] Was ever such a request to a man in his own house!

Mar. Yes, sir, supper, sir; I begin to feel an appetite. I shall make devilish work to-night in the larder, I promise you.

Hard. [*Aside.*] Such a brazen dog sure never my eyes beheld. [*To him.*] Why really, sir, as for supper, I can't well tell. Mrs Dorothy and the cook-maid settle these things between them. I leave these kind of things entirely to them.

Mar. You do, do you?

Hard. Entirely. By-the-bye, I believe they are in actual consultation upon what's for supper this moment in the kitchen.

Mar. Then I beg they'll admit me as one of their privy-council. It's a way I've got. When I travel, I always choose to regulate my own supper. Let the cook be called. No offence, I hope, sir?

Hard. O no, sir, none in the least: yet I don't know how, our Bridget, the cook-maid, is not very communicative upon these occasions. Should we send for her, she might scold us all out of the house.

Hast. Let's see the list of the larder then. I ask it as a favour. I always match my appetite to my bill of fare.

Mar. [*To* HARDCASTLE, *who looks at them with surprise.*] Sir, he's very right, and it's my way too.

Hard. Sir, you have a right to command here. Here, Roger, bring us the bill of fare for to-night's supper. I believe it's drawn out. Your manner, Mr Hastings, puts me in mind of my uncle, Colonel Wallop. It was a saying of his, that no man was sure of his supper till he had eaten it.

Hast. [*Aside.*] All upon the high ropes! His uncle a colonel! we shall soon hear of his mother being a justice of peace. But let's hear the bill of fare.

Mar. [*Perusing.*] What's here? For the first

course; for the second course; for the dessert. The devil, sir, do you think we have brought down the whole Joiners' Company, or the corporation of Bedford, to eat up such a supper? Two or three little things, clean and comfortable, will do.

Hast. But, let's hear it.

Mar. [*Reading.*] For the first course at the top, a pig and pruin sauce.

Hast. Damn your pig, I say.

Mar. And damn your pruin sauce, say I.

Hard. And yet, gentlemen, to men that are hungry, pig, with pruin sauce, is very good eating.

Mar. At the bottom, a calf's tongue and brains.

Hast. Let your brains be knocked out, my good sir; I don't like them.

Mar. Or you may clap them on a plate by themselves. I do.

Hard. [*Aside.*] Their impudence confounds me. [*To them.*] Gentlemen, you are my guests, make what alterations you please. Is there any thing else you wish to retrench or alter, gentlemen?

Mar. Item. A pork pie, a boiled rabbit and sausages, a florentine, a shaking pudding, and a dish of tiff—taff—taffety cream?

Hast. Confound your made dishes! I shall be as much at a loss in this house as at a green and yellow dinner at the French ambassador's table. I'm for plain eating.

Hard. I'm sorry, gentlemen, that I have nothing you like; but if there be any thing you have a particular fancy to——

Mar. Why, really, sir, your bill of fare is so exquisite, that any one part of it is full as good as another. Send us what you please. So much for supper. And now to see that our beds are air'd, and properly taken care of.

Hard. I entreat you'll leave all that to me. You shall not stir a step.

Mar. Leave that to you! I protest, sir, you must excuse me; I always look to these things myself.

Hard. I must insist, sir, you'll make yourself easy on that head.

Mar. You see I'm resolved on it. [*Aside.*] A very troublesome fellow this as ever I met with.

Hard. Well, sir, I'm resolved at least to attend you. [*Aside.*] This may be modern modesty, but I never saw any thing look so like old-fashioned impudence. [*Exeunt* MARLOW *and* HARDCASTLE.

Hast. So I find this fellow's civilities begin to grow troublesome. But who can be angry at those assiduities which are meant to please him? Ha! what do I see? Miss Neville, by all that's happy!

Enter Miss NEVILLE.

Miss Nev. My dear Hastings! to what unexpected good fortune, to what accident, am I to ascribe this happy meeting?

Hast. Rather let me ask the same question, as I could never have hoped to meet my dearest Constance at an inn.

Miss Nev. An inn! sure you mistake! my aunt, my guardian lives here. What could induce you to think this house an inn?

Hast. My friend, Mr Marlow, with whom I came down, and I, have been sent here as to an inn, I assure you. A young fellow, whom we accidentally met at a house hard by, directed us hither.

Miss Nev. Certainly it must be one of my hopeful cousin's tricks, of whom you have heard me talk so often; ha! ha! ha! ha!

Hast. He whom your aunt intends for you? He of whom I have such just apprehensions?

Miss Nev. You have nothing to fear from him, I assure you. You'd adore him if you knew how heartily he despises me. My aunt knows it too, and has undertaken to court me for him, and actually begins to think she has made a conquest.

Hast. Thou dear dissembler! You must know, my Constance, I have just seized this happy opportunity of my friend's visit here to get admittance into the family. The horses that carried us down are now fatigued with the journey, but they'll soon be refreshed; and then, if my dearest girl will trust in her faithful Hastings, we shall soon be landed in France, where, even among slaves, the laws of marriage are respected.

Miss Nev. I have often told you, that, though ready to obey you, I yet should leave my little fortune behind with reluctance. The greatest part of it was left me by my uncle, the Indian director, and chiefly consists in jewels. I have been for some time persuading my aunt to let me wear them. I fancy I'm very near succeeding. The instant they are put into my possession you shall find me ready to make them and myself yours.

Hast. Perish the baubles! Your person is all I desire. In the mean time, my friend Marlow must not be let into his mistake. I know the strange reserve of his temper is such, that if abruptly informed of it, he would instantly quit the house before our plan was ripe for execution.

Miss Nev. But how shall we keep him in the deception? Miss Hardcastle is just returned from walking; what if we still continue to deceive him?
———This, this way——— [*They confer.*

Enter MARLOW.

Mar. The assiduities of these good people tease me beyond bearing. My host seems to think it ill manners to leave me alone, and so he claps not only himself but his old-fashioned wife on my back. They talk of coming to sup with us too; and then, I suppose, we are to run the gauntlet thro' all the rest of the family—What have we got here?——

Hast. My dear Charles! let me congratulate you—The most fortunate accident!—Who do you think is just alighted?

Mar. Cannot guess.

Hast. Our mistresses, boy, Miss Hardcastle and Miss Neville. Give me leave to introduce Miss Constance Neville to your acquaintance. Happening to dine in the neighbourhood, they called on their return to take fresh horses here. Miss Hardcastle has just stept into the next room, and will be back in an instant. Wasn't it lucky, eh?

Mar. [*Aside.*] I have just been mortified enough of all conscience, and here comes something to complete my embarrassment.

Hast. Well! but wasn't it the most fortunate thing in the world?

Mar. Oh yes! very fortunate—a most joyful encounter———But our dresses, George, you know, are in disorder———What if we should postpone the happiness till to-morrow?———To-morrow at her own house———It will be every bit as convenient, and rather more respectful———To-morrow let it be. [*Offering to go.*

Miss Nev. By no means, sir. Your ceremony will displease her. The disorder of your dress will shew the ardour of your impatience. Besides, she knows you are in the house, and will permit you to see her.

Mar. O! the devil, how shall I support it! Hem! hem! Hastings, you must not go. You are to assist me, you know. I shall be confoundedly ridiculous. Yet, hang it! I'll take courage. Hem!

Hast. Pshaw, man! it's but the first plunge, and all's over. She's but a woman, you know.

Mar. And of all women, she that I dread most to encounter!

Enter Miss HARDCASTLE, *as returning from walking, a Bonnet, &c.*

Hast. [*Introducing them.*] Miss Hardcastle, Mr Marlow. I'm proud of bringing two persons of such merit together, that only want to know, to esteem each other.

Miss Hard. [*Aside.*] Now, for meeting my modest gentleman with a demure face, and quite in his own manner. [*After a pause, in which he appears very uneasy and disconcerted.*] I'm glad of your safe arrival, sir—I'm told you had some accidents by the way.

Mar. Only a few, madam. Yes, we had some. Yes, madam, a good many accidents, but should be sorry—Madam—or rather glad, of any accidents—that are so agreeably concluded. Hem!

Hast. [*To him.*] You never spoke better in your whole life. Keep it up, and I'll insure you the victory.

Miss Hard. I'm afraid you flatter, sir. You that have seen so much of the finest company, can find little entertainment in an obscure corner of the country.

Mar. [*Gathering courage.*] I have lived, indeed, in the world, madam; but I have kept very little company. I have been but an observer upon life, madam, while others were enjoying it.

Miss Nev. But that, I am told, is the way to enjoy it at last.

Hast. [*To him.*] Cicero never spoke better. Once more, and you are confirmed in assurance for ever.

Mar. [*To him.*] Hem! Stand by me then, and when I'm down, throw in a word or two to set me up again.

Miss Hard. An observer, like you, upon life, were, I fear, disagreeably employed, since you must have had much more to censure than to approve.

Mar. Pardon me, madam. I was always willing to be amused. The folly of most people is rather an object of mirth than uneasiness.

Hast. [*To him.*] Bravo, bravo! Never spoke so well in your whole life. Well! Miss Hardcastle, I see that you and Mr Marlow are going to be very good company. I believe our being here will but embarrass the interview.

Mar. Not in the least, Mr Hastings. We like your company of all things. [*To him.*] Zounds! George, sure you won't go! How can you leave us?

Hast. Our presence will but spoil conversation, so we'll resire to the next room. [*To him.*] You don't consider, man, that we are to manage a little tête-a-tête of our own. [*Exeunt.*

Miss Hard. [*After a pause.*] But you have not been wholly an observer, I presume, sir: The ladies, I should hope, have employed some part of your addresses?

Mar. [*Relapsing into timidity.*] Pardon me, madam, I—I—I—as yet have studied—only—to—deserve them.

Miss Hard. And that, some say, is the very worst way to obtain them.

Mar. Perhaps so, madam; but I love to converse only with the more grave and sensible part of the sex———But I'm afraid I grow tiresome.

Miss Hard. Not at all, sir; there is nothing I like so much as grave conversation myself; I could hear it for ever. Indeed I have often been surprised how a man of sentiment could ever admire those light airy pleasures, where nothing reaches the heart.

Mar. It's———a disease——of the mind, madam. In the variety of tastes, there must be some, who, wanting a relish———for———um—a—um.

Miss Hard. I understand you, sir. There must be some, who, wanting a relish for refined pleasures, pretend to despise what they are incapable of tasting.

Mar. My meaning, madam, but infinitely better expressed. And I cannot help observing—a—

Miss Hard. [*Aside.*] Who could ever suppose this fellow impudent upon some occasions! [*To him.*] You were going to observe, sir———

Mar. I was observing, madam——I protest, madam, I forget what I was going to observe.

Miss Hard. [*Aside.*] I vow, and so do I. [*To him.*] You were observing, sir, that, in this age of hypocrisy—something about hypocrisy, sir.

Mar. Yes, madam, in this age of hypocrisy, there are who, upon strict enquiry, do not—a—a—a—

Miss Hard. I understand you perfectly, sir.

Mar. [*Aside.*] Egad! and that's more than I do myself.

Miss Hard. You mean that, in this hypocritical age, there are few that do not condemn in public what they practise in private, and think they pay every debt to virtue when they praise it.

Mar. True, madam; those who have most virtue in their mouths have least of it in their bosoms. But I'm sure I tire you, madam.

Miss Hard. Not in the least, sir; there's something so agreeable and spirited in your manner, such life and force—Pray, sir, go on.

Mar. Yes, madam, I was saying——that there are some occasions———when a total want of courage, madam, destroys all the———and puts us——upon a——— a———a———

Miss Hard. I agree with you entirely; a want of courage upon some occasions assumes the appearance of ignorance, and betrays us when we most want to excel. I beg you'll proceed.

Mar. Yes, madam. Morally speaking, madam—But I see Miss Neville expecting us in the next room. I would not intrude for the world.

Miss Hard. I protest, sir, I never was more agreeably entertained in all my life. Pray go on.

Mar. Yes, madam, I was—But she beckons us to join her. Madam, shall I do myself the honour to attend you?

Miss Hard. Well, then, I'll follow.

Mar. [*Aside.*] This pretty smooth dialogue has done for me. [*Exit.*

Miss Hard. Ha! ha! ha! Was there ever such a sober sentimental interview! I'm certain he scarce look'd in my face the whole time. Yet the fellow, but for his unaccountable bashfulness, is pretty well too. He has good sense, but then so buried in his fears, that it fatigues one more than ignorance. If I could teach him a little confidence, it would be doing somebody that I know of a piece of service. But who is that somebody?—that, faith, is a question I can scarce answer. [*Exit.*

Enter TONY *and Miss* NEVILLE, *followed by Mrs* HARDCASTLE *and* HASTINGS.

Tony. What do you follow me for, cousin Con.? I wonder you're not asham'd to be so very engaging.

Miss Nev. I hope, cousin, one may speak to one's own relations, and not be to blame.

Tony. Ay, but I know what sort of a relation you want to make me though; but it won't do. I tell you, cousin Con., it won't do, so I beg you'll keep your distance; I want no nearer relationship. [*She follows coquetting him to the back scene.*

Mrs Hard. Well! I vow, Mr Hastings, you are very entertaining. There's nothing in the world I love to talk of so much as London, and the fashions, though I was never there myself.

Hast. Never there! You amaze me! From your air and manner I concluded you had been bred all your life either at Ranelagh, St James's, or Tower Wharf.

Mrs Hard. O! sir, you're only pleased to say so. We country persons can have no manner at all. I'm in love with the town, and that serves to raise me above some of our neighbouring rustics; but who can have a manner that has never seen the Pantheon, the Grotto Gardens, the Borough, and such places, where the nobility chiefly resort? all I can do, is to enjoy London at second-hand. I take care to know every tête-a-tête from the Scandalous Magazine, and have all the fashions as they come out, in a letter from the two Miss Rickets of Crooked-lane. Pray how do you like this head, Mr Hastings?

Hast. Extremely elegant and degagee, upon my word, madam. Your friseur is a Frenchman, I suppose?

Mrs Hard. I protest I dressed it myself from a print in the ladies' memorandum-book for the last year.

Hast. Indeed! Such a head in a side-box, at the play-house, would draw as many gazers as my Lady May'ress at a city ball.

Mrs Hard. I vow since inoculation began, there is no such thing seen as a plain woman; so one must dress a little particular, or one may escape in the crowd.

Hast. But that can never be your case, madam, in any dress. [*Bowing.*

Mrs Hard. Yet, what signifies my dressing, when I have such a piece of antiquity by my side as Mr Hardcastle? All I can say will not argue down a single button from his clothes. I have often wanted him to throw off his great flaxen wig, and where he was bald, to plaster it over, like my Lord Pately, with powder.

Hast. You are right, madam; for, as among the ladies there are none ugly, so among the men there are none old.

Mrs Hard. But what do you think his answer was? Why, with his usual Gothic vivacity, he said I only wanted him to throw off his wig to convert it into a tete for my own wearing.

Hast. Intolerable! At your age you may wear what you please, and it must become you.

Mrs Hard. Pray, Mr Hastings, what do you take to be the most fashionable age about town?

Hast. Some time ago, forty was all the mode; but I'm told the ladies intend to bring up fifty for the ensuing winter.

Mrs Hard. Seriously? Then I shall be too young for the fashion.

Hast. No lady begins now to put on jewels till she's past forty. For instance, Miss there, in a polite circle, would be considered as a child, a mere maker of samplers.

Mrs Hard. And yet Mrs Niece thinks herself as much a woman, and is as fond of jewels, as the oldest of us all.

Hast. Your niece is she? And that young gentleman a brother of yours, I should presume?

Mrs Hard. My son, sir. They are contracted to each other. Observe their little sports. They fall in and out ten times a-day, as if they were man and wife already. [*To them.*] Well, Tony, child, what soft things are you saying to your cousin Constance this evening?

Tony. I have been saying no soft things; but that it's very hard to be followed about so. Ecod! I've not a place in the house now that's left to myself but the stable.

Mrs Hard. Never mind him, Con., my dear. He's in another story behind your back.

Miss Nev. There's something generous in my cousin's manner. He falls out before faces to be forgiven in private.

Tony. That's a damned confounded—crack.

Mrs Hard. Ah! he's a sly one. Don't you think they're like each other about the mouth, Mr Hastings? The Blenkinsop mouth to a T.

They're of a size too. Back to back, my pretties, that Mr Hastings may see you. Come, Tony.

Tony. You had as good not make me, I tell you. [*Measuring.*

Miss Nev. O lud! he has almost cracked my head.

Mrs Hard. O the monster! For shame, Tony. You a man, and behave so!

Tony. If I'm a man, let me have my fortin. Ecod! I'll not be made a fool no longer.

Mrs Hard. Is this, ungrateful boy, all that I'm to get for the pains I have taken in your education? I that have rock'd you in your cradle, and fed that pretty mouth with a spoon! Did not I work that waistcoat to make you genteel? Did not I prescribe for you every day, and weep while the receipt was operating?

Tony. Ecod! you had reason to weep, for you have been dosing me ever since I was born. I have gone through every receipt in the Complete Housewife ten times over; and you have thoughts of coursing me through Quincy next spring. But, ecod! I tell you, I'll not be made a fool of no longer.

Mrs Hard. Wasn't it all for your good, viper? Wasn't it all for your good?

Tony. I wish you'd let me and my good alone then. Snubbing this way when I'm in spirits! If I'm to have any good, let it come of itself; not to keep dinging it, dinging it into one so.

Mrs Hard. That's false: I never see you when you're in spirits. No, Tony, you then go to the alehouse or kennel. I'm never to be delighted with your agreeable wild notes, unfeeling monster!

Tony. Ecod! mamma, your own notes are the wildest of the two.

Mrs Hard. Was ever the like! But I see he wants to break my heart, I see he does.

Hast. Dear madam, permit me to lecture the young gentleman a little. I'm certain I can persuade him to his duty.

Mrs Hard. Well! I must retire. Come, Constance, my love. You see, Mr Hastings, the wretchedness of my situation: Was ever poor woman so plagued with a dear, sweet, pretty, provoking, undutiful boy!

[*Exeunt Mrs* HARDCASTLE *and Miss* NEVILLE.

Tony. [*Singing.*] There was a young man riding by, and fain would have his will. Rang do didlo dee. Don't mind her. Let her cry. It's the comfort of her heart. I have seen her and sister cry over a book for an hour together, and they said they liked the book the better the more it made them cry.

Hast. Then you're no friend to the ladies, I find, my pretty young gentleman?

Tony. That's as I find 'um.

Hast. Not to her of your mother's choosing, I dare answer. And yet she appears to me a pretty well-tempered girl.

Tony. That's because you don't know her as well as I. Ecod! I know every inch about her; and there's not a more bitter cantanckerous toad in all Christendom.

Hast. [*Aside.*] Pretty encouragement this for a lover!

Tony. I have seen her since the height of that. She has as many tricks as a hare in a thicket, or a colt the first day's breaking.

Hast. To me she appears sensible and silent.

Tony. Ay, before company; but when she's with her playmates, she's as loud as a hog in a gate.

Hast. But there's a meek modesty about her that charms me.

Tony. Yes, but curb her never so little, she kicks up, and you're flung in a ditch.

Hast. Well, but you must allow her a little beauty—Yes, you must allow her some beauty.

Tony. Bandbox! she's all a made up thing, mun. Ah! could you but see Bet Bouncer of these parts, you might then talk of beauty. Ecod, she has two eyes as black as sloes, and cheeks as broad and red as a pulpit cushion. She'd make two of she.

Hast. Well, what say you to a friend that would take this bitter bargain off your hands?

Tony. Anan?

Hast. Would you thank him that would take Miss Neville, and leave you to happiness and your dear Betsy?

Tony. Ay; but where is there such a friend; for who would take her?

Hast. I am he. If you but assist me, I'll engage to whip her off to France, and you shall never hear more of her.

Tony. Assist you! Ecod I will, to the last drop of my blood. I'll clap a pair of horses to your chaise that shall trundle you off in a twinkling, and may be get you a part of her fortin beside, in jewels, that you little dream of.

Hast. My dear 'squire, this looks like a lad of spirit.

Tony. Come along then, and you shall see more of my spirit before you have done with me: [*Singing.*

We are the boys
That fears no noise,
Where the thundering cannons roar.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter HARDCASTLE.

Hard. What could my old friend, Sir Charles, mean by recommending his son as the modestest young man in town? To me he appears the most impudent piece of brass that ever spoke with a tongue. He has taken possession of the easy chair by the fire-side already. He took off his boots in the parlour, and desired me to see them taken care of. I'm desirous to know how his impudence

affects my daughter.—She will certainly be shocked at it.

Enter Miss HARDCASTLE, *plainly dressed.*

Hard. Well, my Kate, I see you have changed your dress as I bid you; and yet, I believe, there was no great occasion.

Miss Hard. I find such a pleasure, sir, in obeying your commands, that I take care to observe them without ever debating their propriety.

Hard. And yet, Kate, I sometimes give you some cause, particularly when I recommended my modest gentleman to you as a lover to-day.

Miss Hard. You taught me to expect something extraordinary, and I find the original exceeds the description.

Hard. I was never so surprised in my life! He has quite confounded all my faculties!

Miss Hard. I never saw any thing like it: And a man of the world too!

Hard. Ay, he learned it all abroad—What a fool was I, to think a young man could learn modesty by travelling. He might as soon learn wit at a masquerade.

Miss Hard. It seems all natural to him.

Hard. A good deal assisted by bad company and a French dancing-master.

Miss Hard. Sure you mistake, papa! A French dancing-master could never have taught him that timid look—that awkward address—that bashful manner——

Hard. Whose look? whose manner, child?

Miss Hard. Mr Marlow's: his mauvaise honte, his timidity, struck me at the first sight.

Hard. Then your first sight deceived you; for I think him one of the most brazen first-sights that ever astonished my senses.

Miss Hard. Sure, sir, you rally? I never saw any one so modest.

Hard. And can you be serious? I never saw such a bouncing, swaggering puppy since I was born. Bully Dawson was but a fool to him.

Miss Hard. Surprising! He met me with a respectful bow, a stammering voice, and a look fixed on the ground.

Hard. He met me with a loud voice, a lordly air, and a familiarity that made my blood freeze again.

Miss Hard. He treated me with diffidence and respect; censured the manners of the age; admired the prudence of girls that never laughed; tired me with apologies for being tiresome; then left the room with a bow, and, Madam, I would not for the world detain you.

Hard. He spoke to me as if he knew me all his life before. Asked twenty questions, and never waited for an answer. Interrupted my best remarks with some silly pun, and when I was in my best story, of the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene, he asked if I had not a good hand at making punch? Yes, Kate, he ask'd your father if he was a maker of punch!

Miss Hard. One of us must certainly be mistaken.

Hard. If he be what he has shewn himself, I'm determined he shall never have my consent.

Miss Hard. And if he be the sullen thing I take him, he shall never have mine.

Hard. In one thing, then, we are agreed—to reject him.

Miss Hard. Yes; but upon conditions. For, if you should find him less impudent, and I more presuming; if you find him more respectful, and I more importunate——I don't know——the fellow is well enough for a man—Certainly we don't meet many such at a horse-race in the country.

Hard. If we should find him so——But that's impossible. The first appearance has done my business. I'm seldom deceived in that.

Miss Hard. And yet there may be many good qualities under that first appearance.

Hard. Aye, when a girl finds a fellow's outside to her taste, she then sets about guessing the rest of his furniture. With her a smooth face stands for good sense, and a genteel figure for every virtue.

Miss Hard. I hope, sir, a conversation begun with a compliment to my good sense, won't end with a sneer at my understanding.

Hard. Pardon me, Kate. But if young Mr Brazen can find the art of reconciling contradictions, he may please us both, perhaps.

Miss Hard. And, as one of us must be mistaken, what if we go to make further discoveries?

Hard. Agreed. But depend on't I'm in the right.

Miss Hard. And depend on't I'm not much in the wrong. [*Exeunt.*

Enter TONY, *running in with a casket.*

Tony. Ecod! I have got them. Here they are, my cousin Con.'s necklaces, bobs and all. My mother sha'n't cheat the poor souls out of their fortune neither. O! my genius, is that you?

Enter HASTINGS.

Hast. My dear friend, how have you managed with your mother? I hope you have amused her with pretending love for your cousin, and that you are willing to be reconciled at last? Our horses will be refreshed in a short time, and we shall soon be ready to set off.

Tony. And here's something to bear your charges by the way, [*Giving the casket.*] your sweetheart's jewels. Keep them, and hang those, I say, that would rob you of one of them.

Hast. But how have you procured them from your mother?

Tony. Ask me no questions, and I'll tell you no fibs. I procured them by the rule of thumb. If I had not a key to every drawer in mother's bureau, how could I go to the alehouse so often as I do? An honest man may rob himself of his own at any time.

Hast. Thousands do it every day. But to be plain with you; Miss Neville is endeavouring to procure them from her aunt this very instant. If she succeeds, it will be the most delicate way at least of obtaining them.

Tony. Well, keep them, till you know how it will be. But I know how it will be well enough; she'd as soon part with the only sound tooth in her head.

Hast. But I dread the effects of her resentment, when she finds she has lost them.

Tony. Never you mind her resentment, leave me to manage that. I don't value her resentment the bounce of a cracker. Zounds! here they are. Morrice. Prance. [*Exit* HASTINGS

Enter Mrs HARDCASTLE *and Miss* NEVILLE.

Mrs Hard. Indeed, Constance, you amaze me. Such a girl as you want jewels! It will be time enough for jewels, my dear, twenty years hence, when your beauty begins to want repairs.

Miss Nev. But what will repair beauty at forty, will certainly improve it at twenty, madam.

Mrs Hard. Yours, my dear, can admit of none. That natural blush is beyond a thousand ornaments. Besides, child, jewels are quite out at present. Don't you see half the ladies of our acquaintance, my Lady Kill-day-light, and Mrs Crump, and the rest of them, carry their jewels to town, and bring nothing but paste and marcasites back?

Miss Nev. But who knows, madam, but somebody that shall be nameless would like me best with all my little finery about me?

Mrs Hard. Consult your glass, my dear, and then see if, with such a pair of eyes, you want any better sparklers. What do you think, Tony, my dear, does your cousin Con. want any jewels, in your eyes, to set off her beauty?

Tony. That's as thereafter may be.

Miss Nev. My dear aunt, if you knew how it would oblige me—

Mrs Hard. A parcel of old-fashioned rose and table-cut things. They would make you look like the court of King Solomon at a puppet-shew. Besides, I believe I cann't readily come at them. They may be missing, for aught I know to the contrary.

Tony. [*Apart to Mrs* HARD.] Then, why don't you tell her so at once, as she's so longing for them? Tell her they're lost. It's the only way to quiet her. Say they're lost, and call me to bear witness.

Mrs Hard. [*Apart to* TONY.] You know, my dear, I'm only keeping them for you. So, if I say they're gone, you'll bear me witness, will you? He! he! he!

Tony. Never fear me. Ecod! I'll say I saw them taken out with my own eyes.

Miss Nev. I desire them but for a day, madam. Just to be permitted to shew them as relics, and then they may be lock'd up again.

Mrs Hard. To be plain with you, my dear Constance, if I could find them, you should have them. They're missing, I assure you. Lost, for aught I know; but we must have patience wherever they are.

Miss Nev. I'll not believe it; this is but a shallow pretence to deny me. I know they're too valuable to be so slightly kept, and as you are to answer for the loss.

Mrs Hard. Don't be alarmed, Constance. If they be lost, I must restore an equivalent. But my son knows they are missing, and not to be found.

Tony. That I can bear witness to. They are missing, and not to be found, I'll take my oath on't.

Mrs Hard. You must learn resignation, my dear; for tho' we lose our fortune, yet we should not lose our patience. See me, how calm I am.

Miss Nev. Ay, people are generally calm at the misfortunes of others.

Mrs Hard. Now, I wonder a girl of your good sense should waste a thought upon such trumpery. We shall soon find them; and in the mean time, you shall make use of my garnets till your jewels be found.

Miss Nev. I detest garnets.

Mrs Hard. The most becoming things in the world to set off a clear complexion. You have often seen how well they look upon me. You shall have them. [*Exit.*

Miss Nev. I dislike them of all things. You sha'n't stir.—Was ever any thing so provoking, to mislay my own jewels, and force me to wear trumpery!

Tony, Don't be a fool. If she gives you the garnets, take what you can get. The jewels are your own already. I have stolen them out of her bureau, and she does not know it. Fly to your spark, he'll tell you more of the matter. Leave me to manage her.

Miss Nev. My dear cousin—

Tony. Vanish. She's here, and has missed them already. Zounds! how she fidgets and spits about like a catharine wheel!

Enter Mrs HARDCASTLE.

Mrs Hard. Confusion! thieves! robbers! We are cheated, plundered, broke open, undone!

Tony. What's the matter, what's the matter, mamma? I hope nothing has happened to any of the good family?

Mrs Hard. We are robbed. My bureau has been broke open, the jewels taken out, and I'm undone.

Tony. Oh! is that all? Ha! ha! ha! By the laws, I never saw it better acted in my life. Ecod, I thought you was ruined in earnest, ha, ha, ha!

Mrs Hard. Why, boy, I am ruined in earnest. My bureau has been broke open, and all taken away!

Tony. Stick to that; ha, ha, ha! stick to that; I'll bear witness, you know; call me to bear witness.

Mrs Hard. I tell you, Tony, by all that's precious, the jewels are gone, and I shall be ruined for ever.

Tony. Sure I know they're gone, and I am to say so.

Mrs Hard. My dearest Tony, but hear me. They're gone, I say.

Tony. By the laws, mamma, you make me for to laugh, ha! ha! I know who took them well enough, ha! ha! ha!

Mrs Hard. Was there ever such a blockhead, that cann't tell the difference between jest and earnest! I tell you I'm not in jest, booby.

Tony. That's right, that's right: You must be in a bitter passion, and then nobody will suspect either of us. I'll bear witness that they are gone.

Mrs Hard. Was there ever such a cross-grained brute, that won't hear me! Can you bear witness that you're no better than a fool? Was ever poor woman so beset with fools on one hand, and thieves on the other!

Tony, I can bear witness to that.

Mrs Hard. Bear witness again, you blockhead you, and I'll turn you out of the room directly. My poor niece, what will become of her! Do you laugh, you unfeeling brute, as if you enjoyed my distress?

Tony. I can bear witness to that.

Mrs Hard. Do you insult me, monster? I'll teach you to vex your mother, I will!

Tony. I can bear witness to that.

[*He runs off, she follows him.*

Enter Miss HARDCASTLE *and Maid.*

Miss Hard. What an unaccountable creature is that brother of mine, to send them to the house as an inn, ha! ha! I don't wonder at his impudence.

Maid. But what is more, madam, the young gentleman, as you passed by in your present dress, asked me, if you were the bar-maid? He mistook you for the bar-maid, madam.

Miss Hard. Did he? Then as I live I'm resolved to keep up the delusion. Tell me, Pimple, how do you like my present dress? Don't you think I look something like Cherry in the Beaux Stratagem?

Maid. It's the dress, madam, that every lady wears in the country, but when she visits or receives company.

Miss Hard. And are you sure he does not remember my face or person?

Maid. Certain of it.

Miss Hard. I vow I thought so; for though we spoke for some time together, yet his fears were such, that he never once looked up during the interview. Indeed, if he had, my bonnet would have kept him from seeing me.

Maid. But what do you hope from keeping him in his mistake?

Miss Hard. In the first place, I shall be seen, and that is no small advantage to a girl who brings her face to market. Then I shall perhaps make an acquaintance, and that's no small victory gained over one who never addresses any but the wildest of her sex. But my chief aim is to take my gentleman off his guard, and, like an invisible champion of romance, examine the giant's force before I offer to combat.

Maid. But are you sure you can act your part, and disguise your voice, so that he may mistake that, as he has already mistaken your person?

Miss Hard. Never fear me. I think I have got the true bar-cant—Did your honour call?—Attend the Lion there——Pipes and tabacco for the Angel—The Lamb has been outrageous this half-hour.

Maid. It will do, madam. But he's here.

[*Exit Maid.*

Enter MARLOW.

Mar. What a bawling in every part of the house! I have scarce a moment's repose. If I go to the best room, there I find my host and his story. If I fly to the gallery, there we have my hostess with her curtsey down to the ground. I have at last got a moment to myself, and now for recollection. [*Walks and muses.*

Miss Hard. Did you call, sir? did your honour call?

Mar. [*Musing.*] As for Miss Hardcastle, she's too grave and sentimental for me.

Miss Hard. Did your honour call?

[*She still places herself before him, he turning away.*

Mar. No, child. [*Musing.*] Besides, from the glimpse I had of her, I think she squints.

Miss Hard. I'm sure, sir, I heard the bell ring.

Mar. No, no. [*Musing.*] I have pleased my fat r, however, by coming down, and I'll to-morrow please myself by returning.

[*Taking out his tablets, and perusing.*

Miss Hard. Perhaps the other gentleman called, sir.

Mar. I tell you, no!

Miss Hard. I should be glad to know, sir. We have such a parcel of servants.

Mar. No, no, I tell you. [*Looks fulls in her face.*] Yes, child, I think I did call. I wanted—I vow, child, you're vastly handsome.

Miss Hard. O la, sir, you'll make one ashamed.

Mar. Never saw a more sprightly malicious eye. Yes, yes, my dear, I did call. Have you got any of your a——a——what d'ye call it, in the house?

Miss Hard. No, sir, we have been out of that these ten days.

Mar. One may call in this house, I find, to very little purpose. Suppose I should call for a taste, just by way of trial, of the nectar of your lips; perhaps I might be disappointed in that too.

Miss Hard. Nectar! nectar! that's a liquor there's no call for in these parts. French I suppose. We keep no French wines here, sir.

Mar. Of true English growth, I assure you.

Miss Hard. Then it's odd I should not know it. We brew all sorts of wines in this house, and I have lived here these eighteen years.

Mar. Eighteen years! Why, one would think, child, you kept the bar before you were born. How old are you?

Miss Hard. O! sir, I must not tell my age. They say women and music should never be dated.

Mar. To guess at this distance, you cann't be much above forty. [*Approaching.*] Yet, nearer, I don't think so much. [*Approaching.*] By coming

close to some women they look younger still; but when we come very close indeed—[*Attempting to kiss her.*]

Miss Hard. Pray, sir, keep your distance. One would think you wanted to know one's age as they do horses', by mark of mouth.

Mar. I protest, child, you use me extremely ill. If you keep me at this distance, how is it possible you and I can be ever acquainted?

Miss Hard. And who wants to be accquainted with you? I want no such acquaintance, not I: I'm sure you did not treat Miss Hardcastle that was here a while ago in this obstropalous manner. I'll warrant me, before her you look'd dash'd, and kept bowing to the ground, and talk'd, for all the world, as if you was before a justice of the peace.

Mar. [*Aside.*] Egad! she has hit it, sure enough. [*To her.*] In awe of her, child? Ha! ha! ha! A mere awkward, squinting thing! no, no. I find you don't know me. I laugh'd and rallied her a little; but I was unwilling to be too severe. No, I could not be too severe, curse me!

Miss Hard. O! then, sir, you are a favourite, I find, among the ladies?

Mar. Yes, my dear, a great favourite. And yet, hang me, I don't see what they find in me to follow. At the ladies' club in town, I'm call'd their agreeable Rattle. Rattle, child, is not my real name, but one I'm known by. My name is Solomons. Mr Solomons, my dear, at your service. [*Offering to salute her.*]

Miss Hard. Hold, sir! you were introducing me to your club, not to yourself. And you're so great a favourite there, you say?

Mar. Yes, my dear. There's Mrs Mantrap, Lady Betty Blackleg, the Countess of Sligo, Mrs Longhorns, old Miss Biddy Buckskin, and your humble servant, keep up the spirit of the place.

Miss Hard. Then it's a very merry place, I suppose.

Mar. Yes, as merry as cards, suppers, wine, and old women can make us.

Miss Hard. And their agreeable Rattle, ha! ha! ha!

Mar. [*Aside.*] Egad! I don't quite like this chit. She looks knowing, methinks. You laugh, child!

Miss Hard. I cann't but laugh to think what time they all have for minding their work or their family.

Mar. [*Aside.*] All's well; she don't laugh at me. [*To her.*] Do you ever work, child?

Miss Hard. Ay, sure. There's not a screen or a quilt in the whole house but what can bear witness to that.

Mar. Odso! Then you must shew me your embroidery. I embroider and draw patterns myself a little. If you want a judge of your work, you must apply to me. [*Seizing her hand.*

Miss Hard. Ay, but the colours don't look well by candle-light. You shall see all in the morning. [*Struggling.*

Mar. And why not now, my angel? Such beauty fires beyond the power of resistance—— Pshaw! the father here! My old luck! I never nicked seven that I did not throw ames ace three times following. [*Exit* MARLOW.

Enter HARDCASTLE, *who stands in surprise.*

Hard. So, madam! So I find this is your modest lover. This is your humble admirer that kept his eyes fixed on the ground, and only adored at humble distance. Kate, Kate, art thou not ashamed to deceive your father so?

Miss Hard. Never trust me, dear papa, but he's still the modest man I first took him for; you'll be convinced of it as well as I.

Hard. By the hand of my body, I believe his impudence is infectious! Didn't I see him seize your hand? Didn't I see him haul you about like a milk-maid? and now you talk of his respect and his modesty, forsooth!

Miss Hard. But if I shortly convince you of his modesty, that he has only the faults that will pass off with time, and the virtues that will improve with age, I hope you'll forgive him.

Hard. The girl would actually make one run mad! I tell you I'll not be convinced. I am convinced. He has scarcely been three hours in the house, and he has already encroached on all my prerogatives. You may like his impudence, and call it modesty; but my son-in-law, madam, must have very different qualifications.

Miss Hard. Sir, I ask but this night to convince you.

Hard. You shall not have half the time, for I have thoughts of turning him out this very hour.

Miss Hard. Give me that hour then, and I hope to satisfy you.

Hard. Well, an hour let it be then. But I'll have no trifling with your father. All fair and open, do you mind me?

Miss Hard. I hope, sir, you have ever found that I considered your commands as my pride; for your kindness is such, that my duty as yet has been inclination. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter HASTINGS *and Miss* NEVILLE.

Hast. You surprise me! Sir Charles Marlow expected here this night? Where have you had your information?

Miss Nev. You may depend upon it. I just saw his letter to Mr Hardcastle, in which he tells him he intends setting out a few hours after his son.

Hast. Then, my Constance, all must be completed before he arrives. He knows me; and,

should he find me here, would discover my name, and perhaps my designs, to the rest of the family.

Miss Nev. The jewels, I hope, are safe.

Hast. Yes, yes. I have sent them to Marlow, who keeps the keys of our baggage. In the mean time, I'll go to prepare matters for our elopement. I have had the squire's promise of a fresh pair of horses; and if I should not see him again, will write him further directions.

[*Exit.*

Miss Nev. Well! success attend you. In the mean time, I'll go amuse my aunt with the old pretence of a violent passion for my cousin.

[*Exit.*

Enter MARLOW, *followed by a Servant.*

Mar. I wonder what Hastings could mean by sending me so valuable a thing as a casket to keep for him, when he knows the only place I have is the seat of a post coach at an inn door. Have you deposited the casket with the landlady, as I ordered you? Have you put it into her own hands?

Serv. Yes, your honour.

Mar. She said she'd keep it safe, did she?

Serv. Yes, she said she'd keep it safe enough; she asked me how I came by it? and she said she had a great mind to make me give an account of myself. [*Exit Servant.*

Mar. Ha! ha! ha! They're safe, however. What an unaccountable set of beings have we got amongst! This little bar-maid though runs in my head most strangely, and drives out the absurdities of all the rest of the family. She's mine, she must be mine, or I'm greatly mistaken.

Enter HASTINGS.

Hast. Bless me! I quite forgot to tell her that I intended to prepare at the bottom of the garden. Marlow here, and in spirits too!

Mar. Give me joy, George! Crown me, shadow me with laurels! Well, George, after all, we modest fellows don't want for success among the women.

Hast. Some women you mean. But what success has your honour's modesty been crowned with now, that it grows so insolent upon us?

Mar. Didn't you see the tempting, brisk, lovely little thing that runs about the house with a bunch of keys to its girdle?

Hast. Well! and what then?

Mar. She's mine, you rogue you. Such fire, such motion, such eyes, such lips——but egad, she would not let me kiss them though.

Hast. But are you so sure, so very sure of her?

Mar. Why, man, she talked of shewing me her work above stairs, and I'm to improve the pattern.

Hast. But how can you, Charles, go about to rob a woman of her honour?

Mar. Pshaw! pshaw! we all know the honour of the bar-maid of an inn. I don't intend to rob her, take my word for it; there's nothing in this house I sha'n't honestly pay for.

Hast. I believe the girl has virtue.

Mar. And if she has, I should be the last man in the world that would attempt to corrupt it.

Hast. You have taken care, I hope, of the casket I sent you to lock up? It's in safety?

Mar. Yes, yes; it's safe enough. I have taken care of it. But how could you think the seat of a post-coach, at an inn door, a place of safety? Ah, numbskull! I have taken better precautions for you than you did for yourself. I have——

Hast. What?

Mar. I have sent it to the landlady to keep for you.

Hast. To the landlady!

Mar. The landlady.

Hast. You did?

Mar. I did. She's to be answerable for its forthcoming, you know.

Hast. Yes, she'll bring it forth with a witness.

Mar. Wasn't I right? I believe you'll allow that I acted prudently upon this occasion?

Hast. [*Aside.*] He must not see my uneasiness.

Mar. You seem a little disconcerted though, methinks. Sure nothing has happened?

Hast. No, nothing. Never was in better spirits in all my life. And so you left it with the landlady, who, no doubt, very readily undertook the charge?

Mar. Rather too readily; for she not only kept the casket, but, through her great precaution, was going to keep the messenger too. Ha! ha! ha!

Hast. He! he! he! They're safe, however.

Mar. As a guinea in a miser's purse.

Hast. [*Aside.*] So now all hopes of fortune are at an end, and we must set off without it. [*To him.*] Well, Charles, I'll leave you to your meditations on the pretty bar-maid, and, he! he! he! may you be as successful for yourself as you have been for me. [*Exit.*

Mar. Thank ye, George! I ask no more, ha! ha! ha!

Enter HARDCASTLE.

Hard. I no longer know my own house. It's turned all topsy-turvy. His servants have got drunk already. I'll bear it no longer; and yet, from my respect for his father, I'll be calm. [*To him.*] Mr Marlow, your servant. I'm your very humble servant. [*Bowing low.*

Mar. Sir, your humble servant. [*Aside.*] What's to be the wonder now?

Hard. I believe, sir, you must be sensible, sir, that no man alive ought to be more welcome than your father's son, sir. I hope you think so?

Mar. I do, from my soul, sir. I don't want much entreaty. I generally make my father's son welcome wherever he goes.

Hard. I believe you do, from my soul, sir. But though I say nothing to your own conduct, that of your servants is insufferable. Their manner of drinking is setting a very bad example in this house, I assure you.

Mar. I protest, my very good sir, that's no

fault of mine. If they don't drink as they ought, they are to blame. I ordered them not to spare the cellar. I did, I assure you. [*To the side scene.*] Here, let one of my servants come up. [*To him.*] My positive directions were, that, as I did not drink myself, they should make up for my deficiencies below.

Hard. Then they had your orders for what they do? I'm satisfied!

Mar. They had, I assure you. You shall hear it from one of themselves.

Enter Servant drunk.

Mar. You, Jeremy! Come forward, sirrah! What were my orders? Were you not told to drink freely, and call for what you thought fit, for the good of the house?

Hard. [*Aside.*] I begin to lose my patience.

Jer. Please your honour, liberty and Fleet-street for ever! Though I am but a servant, I'm as good as another man. I'll drink for no man before supper, sir, dammy! Good liquor will sit upon a good supper, but a good supper will not sit upon ——hiccup——upon my conscience, sir. [*Exit.*

Mar. You see, my old friend, the fellow is as drunk as he can possibly be. I don't know what you'd have more, unless you'd have the poor devil sous'd in a beer-barrel.

Hard. Zounds! he'll drive me distracted if I contain myself any longer. Mr Marlow: Sir, I have submitted to your insolence for more than four hours, and I see no likelihood of its coming to an end. I'm now resolved to be master here, sir, and I desire that you and your drunken pack may leave my house directly.

Mar. Leave your house!——Sure you jest, my good friend? What, when I'm doing what I can to please you?

Hard. I tell you, sir, you don't please me; so I desire you'll leave my house.

Mar. Sure you cannot be serious? At this time o'night, and such a night! You only mean to banter me.

Hard. I tell you, sir, I'm serious; and now that my passions are roused, I say this house is mine, sir, this house is mine, and I command you to leave it directly.

Mar. Ha! ha! ha! A puddle in a storm. I sha'n't stir a step, I assure you. [*In a serious tone.*] This your house, fellow! It's my house. This is my house. Mine, while I choose to stay. What right have you to bid me leave this house, sir? I never met with such impudence, curse me, never in my whole life before.

Hard. Nor I, confound me if ever I did. To come to my house, to call for what he likes, to turn me out of my own chair, to insult the family, to order his servants to get drunk, and then to tell me, This house is mine, sir! By all that's impudent, it makes me laugh. Ha! ha! ha! Pray, sir, [*Bantering.*] as you take the house, what think you of taking the rest of the furniture? There's a pair of silver candlesticks, and there's a fire-screen, and here's a pair of brazen-nosed bellows, perhaps you may take a fancy to them?

Mar. Bring me your bill, sir, bring me your bill, and let's make no more words about it.

Hard. There are a set of prints too. What think you of the Rake's Progress for your own apartment?

Mar. Bring me your bill, I say; and I'll leave you and your infernal house directly.

Hard. Then there's a mahogany table, that you may see your own face in.

Mar. My bill, I say.

Hard. I had forgot the great chair, for your own particular slumbers, after a hearty meal.

Mar. Zounds! bring me my bill, I say, and let's hear no more on't.

Hard. Young man, young man! from your father's letter to me, I was taught to expect a well-bred modest man, as a visitor here, but now I find him no better than a coxcomb and a bully; but he will be down here presently, and shall hear more of it. [*Exit.*

Mar. How's this! Sure I have not mistaken the house! Every thing looks like an inn. The servants cry, Coming. The attendance is awkward; the bar-maid too to attend us. But she's here, and will further inform me. Whither so fast, child? A word with you.

Enter Miss HARDCASTLE.

Miss Hard. Let it be short then. I'm in a hurry. [*Aside.*] I believe he begins to find out his mistake, but it's too soon to quite undeceive him.

Mar. Pray, child, answer me one question: What are you, and what may your business in this house be?

Miss Hard. A relation of the family, sir.

Mar. What,—a poor relation?

Miss Hard. Yes, sir: A poor relation appointed to keep the keys, and to see that the guests want nothing in my power to give them.

Mar. That is, you act as the bar-maid of this inn?

Miss Hard. Inn! O law! What brought that into your head? One of the best families in the county keep an inn! Ha, ha, ha! old Mr Hardcastle's house an inn!

Mar. Mr Hardcastle's house! Is this house Mr Hardcastle's house, child?

Miss Hard. Ay, sure; whose else should it be?

Mar. So then all's out, and I have been damnably imposed upon. O, confound my stupid head! I shall be laugh'd at over the whole town. I shall be stuck up in caricatura in all the print-shops, the Dullissimo Maccaroni. To mistake this house of all others for an inn, and my father's old friend for an innkeeper! What a swaggering puppy must he take me for! What a silly puppy do I find myself! There again, may I be hang'd, my dear, but I mistook you for the bar-maid.

Miss Hard. Dear me! dear me! I'm sure there's nothing in my behaviour to put me upon a level with one of that stamp.

Mar. Nothing, my dear, nothing; but I was in for a list of blunders, and could not help making you a subscriber. My stupidity saw every thing the wrong way. I mistook your assiduity for assu-

rance, and your simplicity for allurement. But it's over—This house I no more shew my face in.

Miss Hard. I hope, sir, I have done nothing to disoblige you. I'm sure I should be very sorry to affront any gentleman who has been so polite, and said so many civil things to me. I'm sure I should be sorry [*Pretending to cry.*] if he left the family upon my account. I'm sure I should be sorry people said any thing amiss, since I have no fortune but my character.

Mar. [*Aside.*] By heaven, she weeps! This is the first mark of tenderness I ever had from a modest woman, and it touches me. [*To her.*] Excuse me, my lovely girl, you are the only part of the family I leave with reluctance. But, to be plain with you, the difference of our birth, fortune, and education, make an honourable connection impossible: and I can never harbour a thought of bringing ruin upon one, whose only fault was being too lovely.

Miss Hard. [*Aside.*] Generous man! I now begin to admire him. [*To him.*] But I'm sure my family is as good as Miss Hardcastle's, and though I'm poor, that's no great misfortune to a contented mind; and, until this moment, I never thought that it was bad to want fortune.

Mar. And why now, my pretty simplicity?

Miss Hard. Because it puts me at a distance from one, that, if I had a thousand pound, I would give it all to.

Mar. [*Aside.*] This simplicity bewitches me, so that, if I stay, I'm undone. I must make one bold effort, and leave her. [*To her.*] Your partiality in my favour, my dear, touches me most sensibly, and were I to live for myself alone, I could easily fix my choice; but I owe too much to the opinion of the world, too much to the authority of a father, so that—I can scarcely speak it—it affects me. Farewell. [*Exit.*

Miss Hard. I never knew half his merit till now. He shall not go, if I have power or art to detain him. I'll still preserve the character in which I stoop'd to conquer, but will undeceive my papa, who, perhaps, may laugh him out of his resolution. [*Exit.*

Enter TONY *and Miss* NEVILLE.

Tony. Ay, you may steal for yourselves the next time, I have done my duty. She has got the jewels again, that's a sure thing; but she believes it was all a mistake of the servants.

Miss Nev. But, my dear cousin, sure you won't forsake us in this distress. If she in the least suspects that I am going off, I shall certainly be locked up, or sent to my aunt Pedigree's, which is ten times worse.

Tony. To be sure, aunts of all kinds are damn'd bad things. But what can I do? I have got you a pair of horses that will fly like Whistle-jacket, and I'm sure you can't say but I have courted you nicely before her face. Here she comes; we must court a bit or two more, for fear she should suspect us. [*They retire, and seem to fondle.*

Enter Mrs HARDCASTLE.

Mrs Hard. Well, I was greatly fluttered, to be sure. But my son tells me it was all a mistake of the servants. I sha'n't be easy, however, till they are fairly married, and then let her keep her own fortune. But what do I see! Fondling together, as I'm alive! I never saw Tony so sprightly before. Ah! have I caught you, my pretty doves? What, billing, exchanging stolen glances, and broken murmurs. Ah!

Tony. As for murmurs, mother, we grumble a little now and then, to be sure. But there's no love lost between us.

Mrs Hard. A mere sprinkling, Tony, upon the flame, only to make it burn brighter.

Miss Nev. Cousin Tony promises to give us more of his company at home. Indeed he sha'n't leave us any more. It won't leave us, cousin Tony, will it?

Tony. O! It's a pretty creature. No, I'd sooner leave my horse in a pound, than leave you when you smile upon one so. Your laugh makes you so becoming.

Miss Nev. Agreeable cousin! who can help admiring that natural humour, that pleasant, broad, red, thoughtless, [*Patting his cheek*] ah! it's a bold face.

Mrs Hard. Pretty innocence!

Tony. I'm sure I always loved cousin Con.'s hazel eyes, and her pretty long fingers, that she twists this way and that, over the haspicholls, like a parcel of bobbins.

Mrs Hard. Ah, he would charm the bird from the tree. I was never so happy before. My boy takes after his father, poor Mr Lumpkin, exactly. The jewels, my dear Con., shall be yours incontinently. You shall have them. Isn't he a sweet boy, my dear? You shall be married to-morrow, and we'll put off the rest of his education, like Dr Drowsey's sermons, to a fitter opportunity.

Enter DIGGORY.

Dig. Where's the 'squire? I have got a letter for your worship.

Tony. Give it to my mamma. She reads all my letters first.

Dig. I had orders to deliver it into your own hands.

Tony. Who does it come from?

Dig. Your worship mun ask that o'the letter itself.

Tony I could wish to know though. [*Turning the letter, and gazing on it.*]

Miss Nev. [*Aside.*] Undone, undone! A letter to him from Hastings. I know the hand. If my aunt sees it, we are ruined for ever. I'll keep her employed a little if I can. [*To Mrs* HARDCASTLE.] But I have not told you, madam, of my cousin's smart answer just now to Mr Marlow. We so laughed—You must know, madam—This way a little, for he must not hear us. [*They confer.*

Tony. [*Still gazing.*] A damn'd cramp piece of

penmanship as ever I saw in my life. I can read your print-hand very well; but here there are such handles, and shanks, and dashes, that one can scarce tell the head from the tail. To Anthony Lumpkin, Esq. It's very odd, I can read the outside of my letters, where my own name is, well enough; but when I come to open it, it's all—buzz. That's hard, very hard: for the inside of the letter is always the cream of the correspondence.

Mrs Hard. Ha! ha! ha! Very well, very well. And so my son was too hard for the philosopher.

Miss Nev. Yes, madam; but you must hear the rest, madam. A little more this way, or he may hear us. You'll hear how he puzzled him again.

Mrs Hard. He seems strangely puzzled now himself, methinks.

Tony. [*Still gazing.*] A damn'd up-and-down hand, as if it was disguised in liquor. [*Reading.*] Dear Sir. Ay, that's that. Then there's an M and a T, and an S, but whether the next be an izzard or an R, confound me, I cannot tell.

Mrs Hard. What's that, my dear? Can I give you any assistance?

Miss Nev. Pray, aunt, let me read it. Nobody reads a cramp hand better than I. [*Twitching the letter from her.*] Do you know who it is from?

Tony. Cann't tell, except from Dick Ginger, the feeder.

Miss Nev. Ay, so it is, [*Pretending to read.*] Dear 'squire, hoping that you're in health, as I am at this present. The gentlemen of the Shakebag club has cut the gentlemen of the Goose-green quite out of feather. The odds—um—odd battle—um—long fighting—um—here, here, it's all about cocks and fighting; it's of no consequence; here, put it up, put it up. [*Thrusting the crumpled letter upon him.*

Tony. But I tell you, Miss, it's of all the consequence in the world. I would not lose the rest of it for a guinea. Here, mother, do you make it out. Of no consequence? [*Giving Mrs* HARDCASTLE *the letter.*

Mrs Hard How's this! [*Reads.*] "Dear 'squire, I'm now waiting for Miss Neville, with a post-chaise and pair, at the bottom of the garden; but I find my horses yet unable to perform the journey. I expect you'll assist us with a pair of fresh horses, as you promised. Dispatch is necessary, as the hag (ay, the hag) your mother will otherwise suspect us. Yours, Hastings." Grant me patience. I shall run distracted! My rage chokes me!

Miss Nev. I hope, madam, you'll suspend your resentment for a few moments, and not impute to me any impertinence, or sinister design, that belongs to another.

Mrs Hard. [*Curtesying very low.*] Fine-spoken madam, you are most miraculously polite and engaging; and quite the very pink of courtesy and circumspection—Madam! [*Changing her tone.*] And you, you great ill-fashioned oaf, with scarce sense enough to keep your mouth shut; were you too join'd against me? But I'll defeat all your plots in a moment. As for you, madam, since you have got a pair of fresh horses ready, it would be cruel to disappoint them. So, if you please, instead of running away with your spark, prepare, this very moment, to run off with me. Your old aunt Pedigree will keep you secure, I'll warrant me. You too, sir, may mount your horse, and guard us upon the way. Here, Thomas, Roger, Diggory. I'll shew you, that I wish you better than you do yourselves. [*Exit.*

Miss Nev. So now I'm completely ruined.

Tony. Ay, that's a sure thing

Miss Nev. What better could be expected from being connected with such a stupid fool, and after all the nods and signs I made him!

Tony. By the laws, Miss, it was your own cleverness, and not my stupidity, that did your business. You were so nice and so busy with your Shakebags and Goose-greens, that I thought you could never be making believe.

Enter HASTINGS.

Hast. So, sir, I find by my servant, that you have shewn my letter, and betray'd us. Was this well done, young gentleman?

Tony. Here's another. Ask Miss there who betray'd you. Ecod, it was her doing, not mine.

Enter MARLOW.

Mar. So, I have been finely used here among you. Rendered contemptible, driven into ill-manners, despised, insulted, laugh'd at.

Tony. Here's another. We shall have old Bedlam broke loose presently.

Miss Nev. And there, sir, is the gentleman to whom we all owe every obligation.

Mar. What can I say to him! a mere booby, an idiot, whose ignorance and age are a protection.

Hast. A poor contemptible booby, that would but disgrace correction.

Miss Nev. Yet with cunning and malice enough to make himself merry with all our embarrassments.

Hast. An insensible cub.

Mar. Replete with tricks and mischief.

Tony. Baw! damme, but I'll fight you both one after the other——with baskets.

Mar. As for him, he's below resentment. But your conduct, Mr Hastings, requires an explanation. You knew of my mistakes, yet would not undeceive me.

Hast. Tortured as I am with my own disappointments, is this a time for explanations? It is not friendly, Mr Marlow.

Mar. But, sir——

Miss Nev. Mr Marlow, we never kept on your mistake, till it was too late to undeceive you. Be pacified.

Enter Servant.

Serv. My mistress desires you'll get ready immediately, madam. The horses are putting to. Your hat and things are in the next room. We are to go thirty miles before morning. [*Exit Servant.*

Miss Nev. Well, well; I'll come presently.

Mar. [*To* HASTINGS.] Was it well done, sir, to assist in rendering me ridiculous? To hang me out for the scorn of all my acquaintance? Depend upon it, sir, I shall expect an explanation.

Hast. Was it well done, sir, if you're upon that subject, to deliver what I entrusted to yourself to the care of another, sir?

Miss Nev. Mr Hastings, Mr Marlow, why will you increase my distress by this groundless dispute? I implore, I entreat you——

Enter Servant.

Serv. Your cloak, madam. My mistress is impatient.

Miss Nev. I come. Pray be pacified. If I leave you thus, I shall die with apprehension.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Your fan, muff, and gloves, madam. The horses are waiting.

Miss Nev. O, Mr Marlow! if you knew what a scene of constraint and ill-nature lies before me, I'm sure it would convert your resentment into pity.

Mar. I'm so distracted with a variety of passions, that I don't know what I do. Forgive me, madam. George, forgive me. You know my hasty temper, and should not exasperate it.

Hast. The torture of my situation is my only excuse.

Miss Nev. Well, my dear Hastings, if you have that esteem for me that I think, that I am sure you have, your constancy for three years will but increase the happiness of our future connection.—If——

Mrs Hard. [*Within.*] Miss Neville! Constance, why Constance, I say.

Miss Nev. I'm coming. Well, constancy. Remember, constancy is the word. [*Exit.*

Hast. My heart, how can I support this! To be so near happiness, and such happiness!

Mar. [*To* TONY.] You see now, young gentleman, the effects of your folly. What might be amusement to you, is here disappointment, and even distress.

Tony. [*From a Reverie.*] Ecod I have hit it. It's here. Your hands. Yours, and yours, my poor sulky. My boots there, ho! Meet me two hours hence at the bottom of the garden; and if you don't find Tony Lumpkin a more good-natured fellow than you thought for, I'll give you leave to take my best horse, and Bet Bouncer into the bargain. Come along. My boots, ho! [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

Enter HASTINGS *and Servant.*

Hast. You saw the old lady and Miss Neville drive off, you say.

Serv. Yes, your honour. They went off in a post coach, and the young 'squire went on horseback. They're thirty miles off by this time.

Hast. Then all my hopes are over.

Serv. Yes, sir. Old Sir Charles is arrived. He and the old gentleman of the house have been laughing at Mr Marlow's mistake this half hour. They are coming this way.

Hast. Then I must not be seen. So now to my fruitless appointment at the bottom of the garden. This is about the time. [*Exit.*

Enter Sir CHARLES MARLOW *and* HARDCASTLE.

Hard. Ha! ha! ha! The peremptory tone in which he sent forth his sublime commands.

Sir Char. And the reserve with which I suppose he treated all your advances.

Hard. And yet he might have seen something in me above a common innkeeper too.

Sir Char. Yes, Dick, but he mistook you for an uncommon innkeeper, ha! ha! ha!

Hard. Well, I'm in too good spirits to think of any thing but joy. Yes, my dear friend, this union of our families will make our personal friendships hereditary; and, though my daughter's fortune is but small—

Sir Char Why, Dick, will you talk of fortune to me? My son is possessed of more than a competence already, and can want nothing but a good and virtuous girl to share his happiness and increase it. If they like each other, as you say they do—

Hard. If, man! I tell you they do like each other. My daughter as good as told me so.

Sir Char. But girls are apt to flatter themselves, you know.

Hard. I saw him grasp her hand in the warmest manner myself; and here he comes to put you out of your ifs, I warrant him.

Enter MARLOW.

Mar. I come, sir, once more, to ask pardon for my strange conduct. I can scarce reflect on my insolence without confusion.

Hard. Tut, boy! a trifle. You take it too gravely. An hour or two's laughing with my daughter will set all to rights again—She'll never like you the worse for it.

Mar. Sir, I shall be always proud of her approbation.

Hard. Approbation is but a cold word, Mr Marlow; if I am not deceived, you have something more than approbation thereabouts. You take me?

Mar. Really, sir, I have not that happiness.

Hard. Come, boy, I'm an old fellow, and know what's what, as well as you that are younger. I know what has past between you; but mum.

Mar. Sure, sir, nothing has past between us but the most profound respect on my side, and

the most distant reserve on hers. You don't think, sir, that my impudence has been passed upon all the rest of the family?

Hard. Impudence! No, I don't say that—Not quite impudence—Though girls like to be played with, and rumpled too sometimes. But she has told no tales, I assure you.

Mar. I never gave her the slightest cause.

Hard. Well, well. I like modesty in its place well enough; but this is over acting, young gentleman. Your father and I will like you the better for it.

Mar. May I die, sir, if I ever——

Hard. I tell you she don't dislike you; and, as I'm sure you like her——

Mar. Dear sir—I protest, sir——

Hard. I see no reason why you should not be joined as fast as the parson can tie you.

Mar. But hear me, sir——

Hard. Your father approves the match; I admire it; every moment's delay will be doing mischief, so—

Mar. But why don't you hear me? By all that's just and true, I never gave Miss Hardcastle the slightest mark of my attachment, or even the most distant hint to suspect me of affection. We had but one interview, and that was formal, modest, and uninteresting.

Hard. [*Aside.*] This fellow's formal, modest impudence is beyond bearing.

Sir Char. And you never grasped her hand, or made any protestations?

Mar. As heaven is my witness, I came down in obedience to your commands. I saw the lady without emotion, and parted without reluctance. I hope you'll exact no further proofs of my duty, nor prevent me from leaving a house in which I suffer so many mortifications. [*Exit.*

Sir Char. I'm astonished at the air of sincerity with which he parted.

Hard. And I'm astonished at the deliberate intrepidity of his assurance.

Sir Char. I dare pledge my life and honour upon his truth.

Hard. Here comes my daughter, and I would stake my happiness upon her veracity.

Enter Miss HARDCASTLE.

Hard. Kate, come hither, child. Answer us sincerely, and without reserve; has Mr Marlow made you any professions of love and affection?

Miss Hard. The question is very abrupt, sir; but, since you require unreserved sincerity, I think he has.

Hard. [*To Sir* CHARLES.] You see.

Sir Char. And pray, madam, have you and my son had more than one interview?

Miss Hard. Yes, sir, several.

Hard. [*To Sir* CHARLES.] You see.

Sir Char. But did he profess any attachment?

Miss Hard. A lasting one.

Sir Char. Did he talk of love?

Miss Hard. Much, sir.

Sir Char. Amazing! And all this formally?

Miss Hard. Formally.

Hard. Now, my friend, I hope you are satisfied?

Sir Char. And how did he behave, madam?

Miss Hard. As most profest admirers do: Said some civil things of my face, talked much of his want of merit, and the greatness of mine; mentioned his heart, gave a short tragedy speech, and ended with pretended rapture.

Sir Char. Now I'm perfectly convinced, indeed. I know his conversation among women to be modest and submissive. This forward, canting, ranting manner by no means describes him, and I'm confident he never sat for the picture.

Miss Hard. Then what, sir, if I should convince you to your face of my sincerity? If you and my papa, in about half an hour, will place yourselves behind that screen, you shall hear him declare his passion to me in person.

Sir Char. Agreed; and if I find him what you describe, all my happiness in him must have an end. [*Exit.*

Miss Hard. And if you don't find him what I describe—I fear my happiness must never have a beginning. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Back of the Gar den.*

Enter HASTINGS.

Hast. What an idiot am I, to wait here for a fellow, who probably takes a delight in mortifying me. He never intended to be punctual, and I'll wait no longer. What do I see? It is he, and perhaps with news of my Constance.

Enter TONY, *booted and spattered.*

Hast. My honest 'squire! I now find you a man of your word. This looks like friendship.

Tony. Ay, I'm your friend, and the best friend you have in the world, if you knew but all. This riding by night, by the bye, is cursedly tiresome. It has shook me worse than the basket of a stage coach.

Hast. But how? Where did you leave your fellow-travellers? Are they in safety? Are they housed?

Tony. Five-and-twenty miles in two hours and a half is no such bad driving. The poor beasts have smoked for it: Rabbit me, but I'd rather ride forty miles after a fox, than ten with such varment.

Hast. Well, but where have you left the ladies? I die with impatience.

Tony. Left them! Why where should I leave them, but where I found them?

Hast. This is a riddle.

Tony. Riddle me this then. What's that goes round the house, and round the house, and never touches the house?

Hast. I'm still astray.

Tony. Why that's it, mun. I have led them astray. By jingo, there's not a pond or slough within five miles of the house but they can tell the taste of.

Hast. Ha, ha, ha! I understand; you took them in a round, while they supposed themselves going

forward. And so you have at last brought them home again.

Tony. You shall hear. I first took them down Feather-bed-lane, where we stuck fast in the mud. I then rattled them crack over the stones of Up-and-down Hill—I then introduced them to the gibbet on Heavy-tree Heath, and from that, with a circumbendibus, I fairly lodged them in the horse-pond at the bottom of the garden.

Hast. But no accident, I hope?

Tony. No, no. Only mother is confoundedly frightened. She thinks herself forty miles off. She's sick of the journey, and the cattle can scarce crawl. So, if your own horses be ready, you may whip off with cousin, and I'll be bound that no soul here can budge a foot to follow you.

Hast. My dear friend, how can I be grateful?

Tony. Ay, now it's dear friend, noble 'squire. Just now it was all idiot, cub, and run me through the guts. Damn your way of fighting, I say. After we take a knock in this part of the country, we kiss and be friends. But if you had run me through the guts, then I should be dead, and you might go kiss the hangman.

Hast. The rebuke is just. But I must hasten to relieve Miss Neville; if you keep the old lady employed, I promise to take care of the young one. [*Exit* HASTINGS.

Tony. Never fear me. Here she comes. Vanish. She's got from the pond, and draggled up to the waist like a mermaid.

Enter Mrs HARDCASTLE.

Mrs Hard. Oh, Tony, I'm killed! Shook! Battered to death! I shall never survive it. That last jolt, that laid us against the quickset hedge, has done my business.

Tony. Alack, mamma! it was all your own fault. You would be for running away by night, without knowing one inch of the way.

Mrs Hard. I wish we were at home again. I never met so many accidents in so short a journey. Drench'd in the mud, overturn'd in a ditch, stuck fast in a slough, jolted to a jelly, and at last to lose our way. Whereabouts do you think we are, Tony?

Tony. By my guess we should be upon Crackskull common, about forty miles from home.

Mrs Hard. O lud! O lud! the most notorious spot in all the country. We only want a robbery to make a complete night on't.

Tony. Don't be afraid, mamma, don't be afraid. Two of the five that kept here are hanged, and the other three may not find us. Don't be afraid. Is that a man that's galloping behind us? No; it's only a tree. Don't be afraid.

Mrs Hard. The fright will certainly kill me.

Tony. Do you see any thing like a black hat moving behind the thicket?

Mrs Hard. O death!

Tony. No, it's only a cow. Don't be afraid, mamma; don't be afraid.

Mrs Hard. As I'm alive, Tony, I see a man coming towards us. Ah! I'm sure on't. If he perceives us, we are undone!

Tony. [*Aside.*] Father-in-law, by all that's unlucky, come to take one of his night walks. [*To her.*] Ah, it's a highwayman with pistols as long as my arm. A damn'd ill-looking fellow.

Mrs Hard. Good heaven defend us! He approaches

Tony. Do you hide yourself in that thicket, and leave me to manage him. If there be any danger, I'll cough and cry hem. When I cough be sure to keep close.

[*Mrs* HARDCASTLE *hides behind a tree in the back scene.*

Enter HARDCASTLE.

Hard. I'm mistaken, or I heard voices of people in want of help. Oh, Tony, is that you? I did not expect you so soon back. Are your mother and her charge in safety?

Tony. Very safe, sir, at my aunt Pedigree's. Hem!

Mrs Hard. [*From behind.*] Ah death! I find there's danger.

Hard. Forty miles in three hours? sure, that's too much, my youngster.

Tony. Stout horses, and willing minds, make short journies, as they say. Hem!

Mrs Hard. [*From behind.*] Sure he'll do the dear boy no harm.

Hard. But I heard a voice here; I should be glad to know from whence it came?

Tony. It was I, sir, talking to myself, sir. I was saying that forty miles in three hours was very good going. Hem! As to be sure it was. Hem! I have got a sort of cold by being out in the air. We'll go in if you please. Hem!

Hard. But if you talk'd to yourself, you did not answer yourself. I am certain I heard two voices, and am resolved [*Raising his voice.*] to find the other out.

Mrs Hard. [*From behind.*] Oh! he's coming to find me out. Oh!

Tony. What need you go, sir, if I tell you? Hem! I'll lay down my life for the truth—Hem—I'll tell you all, sir. [*Detaining him.*

Hard. I tell you, I will not be detained. I insist on seeing. It's in vain to expect I'll believe you.

Mrs Hard. [*Running forward from behind.*] O lud, he'll murder my poor boy, my darling. Here, good gentleman, whet your rage upon me. Take my money, my life, but spare that young gentleman, spare my child, if you have any mercy.

Hard. My wife, as I am a Christian! From whence does she come, or what does she mean?

Mrs Hard. [*Kneeling.*] Take compassion on us, good Mr Highwayman. Take our money, our watches, all we have! but spare our lives. We will never bring you to justice, indeed we won't, good Mr Highwayman.

Hard. I believe the woman's out of her senses. What, Dorothy, don't you know me?

Mrs Hard. Mr Hardcastle, as I'm alive! My fears blinded me. But who, my dear, could have expected to meet you here, in this frightful place,

so far from home? What has brought you to follow us?

Hard. Sure, Dorothy, you have not lost your wits. So far from home! when you are within forty yards of your own door. [*To him.*] This is one of your old tricks, you graceless rogue you. [*To her.*] Don't you know the gate, and the mulberry-tree; and don't you remember the horse-pond, my dear?

Mrs Hard. Yes, I shall remember the horse-pond as long as I live; I have caught my death in it. [*To* TONY.] And is it to you, you graceless varlet, I owe all this? I'll teach you to abuse your mother, I will.

Tony. Ecod, mother, all the parish says you have spoiled me, and so you may take the fruits on't.

Mrs Hard. I'll spoil you, I will.

[*Follows him off the stage. Exeunt.*

Hard. There's morality, however, in his reply. [*Exit.*

Enter HASTINGS *and Miss* NEVILLE.

Hast. My dear Constance, why will you deliberate thus? If we delay a moment, all is lost for ever. Pluck up a little resolution, and we shall soon be out of the reach of her malignity.

Miss Nev. I find it impossible. My spirits are so sunk with the agitations I have suffered, that I am unable to face any new danger. Two or three years patience will at last crown us with happiness.

Hast. Such a tedious delay is worse than inconstancy. Let us fly, my charmer. Let us date our happiness from this very moment. Perish fortune! Love and content will increase what we possess beyond a monarch's revenue. Let me prevail.

Miss Nev. No, Mr Hastings, no. Prudence once more comes to my relief, and I will obey its dictates. In the moment of passion, fortune may be despised, but it ever produces a lasting repentance. I'm resolved to apply to Mr Hardcastle's compassion and justice for redress.

Hast. But though he had the will, he has not the power to relieve you.

Miss Nev. But he has influence, and upon that I am resolved to rely.

Hast. I have no hopes; but, since you persist, I must reluctantly obey you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Changes.*

Enter Sir CHARLES MARLOW *and Miss* HARDCASTLE.

Sir Char. What a situation am I in! If what you say appears, I shall then find a guilty son; if what he says be true, I shall then lose one that, of all others, I most wished for—a daughter.

Miss Hard. I am proud of your approbation, and, to shew I merit it, if you place yourselves as I directed, you shall hear his explicit declaration. But he comes.

Sir Char. I'll to your father, and keep him to the appointment. [*Exit Sir* CHARLES.

Enter MARLOW.

Mar. Though prepared for setting out, I come once more to take leave; nor did I, till this moment, know the pain I feel in the separation.

Miss Hard. [*In her own natural manner.*] I believe these sufferings cannot be very great, sir, which you can so easily remove. A day or two longer, perhaps, might lessen your uneasiness, by shewing the little value of what you now think proper to regret.

Mar. [*Aside.*] This girl every moment improves upon me. [*To her.*] It must not be, madam. I have already trifled too much with my heart. My very pride begins to submit to my passion. The disparity of education and fortune, the anger of a parent, and the contempt of my equals, begin to lose their weight; and nothing can restore me to myself, but this painful effort of resolution.

Miss Hard. Then go, sir. I'll urge nothing more to detain you. Though my family be as good as her's you came down to visit, and my education, I hope, not inferior, what are these advantages without equal affluence? I must remain contented with the slight approbation of imputed merit; I must have only the mockery of your addresses, while all your serious aims are fixed on fortune.

Enter HARDCASTLE *and Sir* CHARLES MARLOW *from behind.*

Sir Char. Here, behind this screen.

Hard. Ay, ay, make no noise. I'll engage my Kate covers him with confusion at last.

Mar. By heavens, madam, fortune was ever my smallest consideration. Your beauty at first caught my eye; for who could see that without emotion? But every moment that I converse with you steals in some new grace, heightens the picture, and gives it stronger expression. What at first seemed rustic plainness, now appears refined simplicity. What seemed forward assurance, now strikes me as the result of courageous innocence and conscious virtue.

Sir Char. What can it mean? He amazes me!

Hard. I told you how it would be. Hush!

Mar. I am now determined to stay, madam, and I have too good an opinion of my father's discernment, when he sees you, to doubt his approbation.

Miss Hard. No, Mr Marlow, I will not, cannot detain you. Do you think I could suffer a connection, in which there is the smallest room for repentance? Do you think I would take the mean advantage of a transient passion, to load you with confusion? Do you think I could ever relish that happiness which was acquired by lessening yours?

Mar. By all that's good, I can have no happiness but what's in your power to grant me; nor shall I ever feel repentance, but in not having seen your merits before. I will stay even contrary to your wishes; and, though you should persist to shun me, I will make my respectful assiduities atone for the levity of my past conduct.

Miss Hard. Sir, I must entreat you'll desist. As our acquaintance began, so let it end, in indifference. I might have given an hour or two to levity; but seriously, Mr Marlow, do you think I could ever submit to a connection, where I must appear mercenary, and you imprudent? Do you think I could ever catch at the confident addresses of a secure admirer?

Mar. [*Kneeling.*] Does this look like security? Does this look like confidence? No, madam, every moment that shews me your merit, only serves to increase my diffidence and confusion. Here let me continue———

Sir Char. I can hold it no longer. Charles, Charles, how hast thou deceived me! Is this your indifference, your uninteresting conversation?

Hard. Your cold contempt; your formal interview? What have you to say now?

Mar. That I'm all amazement! What can it mean?

Hard. It means that you can say and unsay things at pleasure. That you can address a lady in private, and deny it in public; that you have one story for us, and another for my daughter.

Mar. Daughter!—this lady your daughter?

Hard. Yes, sir, my only daughter; my Kate; whose else should she be?

Mar. Oh, the devil!

Miss Hard. Yes, sir, that very identical tall squinting lady you were pleased to take me for [*Curtseying.*] She that you addressed as the mild, modest, sentimental man of gravity, and the bold, forward, agreeable Rattle of the ladies' club; ha, ha, ha!

Mar. Zounds! there's no bearing this; it's worse than death.

Miss Hard. In which of your characters, sir, will you give us leave to address you? As the faltering gentleman, with looks on the ground, that speaks just to be heard, and hates hypocrisy; or the loud confident creature, that keeps it up with Mrs Mantrap, and old Mrs Biddy Buckskin, till three in the morning; ha, ha, ha!

Mar. O, curse on my noisy head! I never attempted to be impudent yet, that I was not taken down. I must be gone.

Hard. By the hand of my body, but you shall not. I see it was all a mistake, and I am rejoiced to find it. You shall not, sir, I tell you. I know she'll forgive you. Won't you forgive him, Kate? We'll all forgive you. Take courage, man.

[*They retire, she tormenting him to the back scene.*

Enter MRS HARDCASTLE *and* TONY.

Mrs Hard. So, so, they're gone off. Let them go, I care not.

Hard. Who gone?

Mrs Hard. My dutiful niece and her gentleman, Mr Hastings, from town. He who came down with our modest visitor here.

Sir Char. Who, my honest George Hastings? As worthy a fellow as lives, and the girl could not have made a more prudent choice.

Hard. Then by the hand of my body, I'm proud of the connection.

Mrs Hard. Well, if he has taken away the lady, he has not taken her fortune; that remains in this family to console us for her loss.

Hard. Sure, Dorothy, you would not be so mercenary?

Mrs Hard. Ay, that's my affair not yours. But you know if your son, when of age, refuses to marry his cousin, her whole fortune is then at her own disposal.

Hard. Ay, but he's not of age, and she has not thought proper to wait for his refusal.

Enter HASTINGS *and Miss* NEVILLE.

Mrs Hard. [*Aside.*] What, returned so soon; I begin not to like it.

Hast. [*To* HARDCASTLE.] For my late attempt to fly off with your niece, let my present confusion be my punishment. We are now come back, to appeal from your justice to your humanity. By her father's consent, I first paid my addresses, and our passions were first founded in duty.

Miss Nev. Since his death, I have been obliged to stoop to dissimulation to avoid oppression. In an hour of levity, I was ready even to give up my fortune to secure my choice. But I am now recover'd from the delusion, and hope from your tenderness what is denied me from a nearer connection.

Mrs Hard. Pshaw, pshaw! this is all but the whining end of a modern novel.

Hard. Be it what it will, I'm glad they are come back to reclaim their due. Come hither, Tony boy. Do you refuse this lady's hand whom I now offer you?

Tony. What signifies my refusing? You know I cann't refuse her till I'm of age, father.

Hard. While I thought concealing your age, boy, was likely to conduce to your improvement, I concurred with your mother's desire to keep it secret; but, since I find she turns it to a wrong use, I must now declare, you have been of age these three months.

Tony. Of age! Am I of age, father?

Hard. Above three months.

Tony. Then you'll see the first use I'll make of my liberty. [*Taking Miss* NEVILLE'S *hand.*] Witness all men by these presents, that I, Anthony Lumpkin, Esquire, of blank place, refuse you, Constantia Neville, spinster, of no place at all, for my true and lawful wife. So Constantia Neville may marry whom she pleases, and Tony Lumpkin is his own man again.

Sir Char. O brave 'squire!

Hast. My worthy friend!

Mrs Hard. My undutiful offspring!

Mar. Joy, my dear George, I give you joy sincerely; and, could I prevail upon my little tyrant here to be less arbitrary, I should be the happiest man alive if you would return me the favour.

Hast. [*To Miss* HARDCASTLE.] Come, madam, you are now driven to the very last scene of all your contrivances. I know you like him, I'm sure he loves you, and you must and shall have him.

Hard. [*Joining their hands.*] And I say so too. And, Mr Marlow, if she makes as good a wife as

she has a daughter, I don't believe you'll ever repent your bargain. So now to supper. To-morrow we shall gather all the poor of the parish about us, and the mistakes of the night shall be crown'd with a merry morning; so, boy, take her: and, as you have been mistaken in the mistress, my wish is that you may never be mistaken in the wife. [*Exeunt.*

EPILOGUE.

BY DR GOLDSMITH.

WELL, having stooped to conquer with success,
And gained a husband without aid from dress,
Still as a bar-maid I could wish it too,
As I have conquer'd him to conquer you:
And let me say, for all your resolution,
That pretty bar-maids have done execution.
Our life is all a play, composed to please,
"We have our exits and our entrances."
The first act shews the simple country maid,
Harmless and young, of ev'ry thing afraid;
Blushes when hired, and with unmeaning action,
"I hopes as how to give you satisfaction."
Her second act displays a livelier scene,——
Th' unblushing bar-maid of a country inn;
Who whisks about the house, at market caters,
Talks loud, coquets the guests, and scolds the waiters.
Next the scene shifts to town, and there she soars,
The chop-house toast of ogling connoissieurs.
On 'squires and cits she there displays her arts,
And on the gridiron broils her lovers' hearts——
And as she smiles, her triumph to complete,
Even common councilmen forget to eat.
The fourth act shews her wedded to the 'squire,
And madam now begins to hold it higher;
Pretends to taste, at operas cries *caro*,
And quits her Nancy Dawson for *Che Faro;*
Dotes upon dancing, and in all her pride,
Swims round the room, the Heinel of Cheapside;
Ogles and leers with artificial skill,
Till. having lost in age the power to kill,
She sits all night at cards, and ogles at spadille.
Such, through our lives the eventful history——
The fifth and last act still remains for me.
The bar-maid now for your protection prays,
Turns female barrister, and pleads for Bayes.

THE

BROTHERS.

BY

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MR SMITH.

VARIOUS the shifts of authors now-a-days,
For operas, farces, pantomimes, and plays;
Some scour each alley of the town for wit,
Begging from door to door the offal bit;
Plunge in each cellar, tumble every stall,
And scud, like tailors, to each house of call;
Gut every novel, strip each monthly muse,
And pillage poet's corner of its news:
That done, they melt the stale farrago down,
And set their dish of scraps before the town;
Boldly invite you to their pilfer'd store,
Cram you, then wonder you can eat no more.
Some, in our English classics deeply read,
Ransack the tombs of the illustrious dead;
Hackney the muse of Shakespear o'er and o'er,
From shoulder to the flank, all drench'd in gore.
Others, to foreign climes and kingdoms roam,
To search for what is better found at home:
The recreant bard, oh! scandal to the age!
Gleams the vile refuse of the Gallic stage.
Not so our bard—To-night, he bids me say,
You shall receive and judge an English play.
From no man's jest he draws felonious praise,
Nor from his neighbour's garden crops his bays;
From his own breast the filial story flows;
And the free scene no foreign master knows:
Nor only tenders he his work as new;
He hopes 'tis good, or would not give it you:
True homely ware, and made of homely stuff,
Right British drugget, honest, warm and rough.
No station'd friends he seeks, no hired applause;
But constitutes you jurors in his cause.
For fame he writes—Should folly be his doom,
Weigh well your verdict, and then give it home:
Should you applaud, let that applause be true;
For undeserved, it shames both him and you.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Sir BENJAMIN DOVE.
BELFIELD *Senior.*
BELFIELD *Junior.*
Captain IRONSIDES.
SKIFF, *Master of the Privateer.*
PATERSON.
Old GOODWIN, *a Fisherman.*
PHILIP, *his Son.*
FRANCIS, *Servant to Belfield Junior.*
JONATHAN, *Servant to Sir Benjamin.*

WOMEN.

Lady DOVE.
SOPHIA, *Sir Benjamin's Daughter.*
VIOLETTA, *Wife to Belfield Senior.*
LUCY WATERS.
FANNY GOODWIN.
Sailors, &c. &c.

SCENE,—*The Sea-Coast of Cornwall.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A rocky Shore, with a Fisherman's Cabin in the Cliff: a violent Tempest, with Thunder and Lightning: a Ship discovered stranded on the Coast. The Characters enter, after having looked out of their Cabin, as if waiting for the Abatement of the Storm.*

GOODWIN, PHILIP, *and* FANNY.

Phil. It blows a rank storm; 'tis well, father, we hauled the boat ashore before the weather came on; she's safe bestowed however, let what will happen.

Good. Ay, Philip, we had need be provident: except that poor skiff, my child, what have we left in this world that we can call our own?

Phil. To my thoughts now we live as happily in this poor hut, as we did yonder in the great house, when you was 'Squire Belfield's principal tenant, and as topping a farmer as any in the whole county of Cornwall.

Good. Ah, child!

Phil. Nay, never droop; to be sure, father, the 'squire has dealt hardly with you, and a mighty point truly he has gained; the ruin of an honest man. If those are to be the uses of a great estate, Heaven continue me what I am!

Fan. Ay, ay, brother, a good conscience in a coarse drugget is better than an aching heart in a silken gown.

Good. Well, children, well, if you can bear misfortunes patiently, 'twere an ill office for me to repine; we have long tilled the earth for a subsistence; now, Philip, we must plough the ocean; in those waves lies our harvest; there, my brave lad, we have an equal inheritance with the best.

Phil. True, father, the sea, that feeds us, provides us an habitation here in the hollow of the cliff; I trust, the 'squire will exact no rent for this dwelling——Alas! that ever two brothers should have been so opposite as our merciless landlord, and the poor young gentleman they say is now dead.

Good. Sirrah, I charge you, name not that unhappy youth to me any more; I was endeavouring to forget him and his misfortunes, when the sight of that vessel in distress brought him afresh to my remembrance; for, it seems, he perished by sea: the more shame upon him, whose cruelty and injustice drove him thither. But come—the wind lulls apace; let us launch the boat, and make a trip to yonder vessel: if we can assist in lightning her, perhaps she may ride it out.

Phil. 'Tis to no purpose; the crew are coming ashore in their boat; I saw them enter the creek.

Good. Did you so? Then do you and your sister step into the cabin, make a good fire, and provide such fish and other stores as you have within: I will go down, and meet them: whoever they may be, that have suffered this misfortune on our coasts, let us remember, children, never to regard any man as an enemy who stands in need of our protection. [*Exit*

Phil. I am strongly tempted to go down to the creek too; if father should light on any mischief ——well, for once in my life, I'll disobey him; sister, you can look to matters within doors; I'll go round by the point, and be there as soon as he.

Fan. Do so, Philip; 'twill be best.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.

Re-enter GOODWIN, *followed by* FRANCIS *and several Sailors, carrying Goods and Chests from the Wreck.*

Good. This way, my friends, this way; there's stowage enough within for all your goods.

Fran. Come, bear a hand, my brave lads, there's no time to lose; follow that honest man, and set down your chests where he directs you.

Sail. Troth, I care not how soon I m quit of mine; 'tis plaguy heavy. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter other Sailors.

1 *Sail.* Here's a pretty spot of work! plague on't, what a night has this been! I thought this damn'd lee-shore would catch us at last.

2 *Sail.* Why, 'twas unpossible to claw her off; well, there's an end of her—The Charming Sally privateer!—Poor soul;—a better sea-boat never swam upon the salt sea.

3 *Sail.* I knew we should have no luck after we took up that woman there from the packet that sunk along side us.

1 *Sail.* What, Madam Violetta, as they call her? Why, 'tis like enough—But hush, here comes our captain's nephew; he's a brave lad, and a seaman's friend, and, between you and me [*Boatswain's whistle.*]——But hark, we are called——Come along. [*Exeunt Sailors.*

SCENE IV.

Enter BELFIELD *Junior and* FRANCIS.

Bel. jun. That ever fortune should cast us upon this coast!—Francis,

Fran. Sir.

Bel. jun. Have the people landed those chests we brought off with us in the boat?

Fran. They have, sir; an old fisherman, whom we met, has shewn us here to a cavern in the cliff, where we have stow'd them all in safety.

Bel. jun. That's well. Where's my uncle?

Fran. On board; no persuasions can prevail on him to quit the ship, which, he swears, will lift

with the tide; his old crony, the master, is with him, and they ply the casks so briskly, that it seems a moot point which fills the fastest, they or the wreck.

Bel. jun. Strange insensibility! but you must bring him off by force then, if there is no other way of saving him; I think, o' my conscience, he is as indifferent to danger as the plank he treads on. We are now thrown upon my unnatural brother's estate; that house, Francis, which you see to the left, is his; and what may be the consequence if he and my uncle should meet, I know not; for such has been Captain Ironsides' resentment on my account, that he has declared war against the very name of Belfield; and, in one of his whimsical passions, you know, insisted on my laying it aside for ever; so that hitherto I have been known on board by no other name than that of Lewson.

Fran. 'Tis true, sir, and I think 'twill be advisable to continue the disguise as long as you can. As for the old captain, from the life he always leads on shore, and his impatience to get on board again, I think 'tis very possible an interview between him and your brother may be prevented.

Bel. jun. I think so too. Go then, Francis, and conduct the old gentleman hither; I see Violetta coming. [*Exit* FRANCIS.] Sure there is something in that woman's story uncommonly mysterious. Of English parents—born in Lisbon—her family and fortune buried in the earthquake——so much she freely tells; but more, I am convinced, remains untold, and of a melancholy sort: she has once or twice, as I thought, seem'd disposed to unbosom herself to me; but it is so painful to be told of sorrows one hasn't power to relieve, that I have hitherto avoided the discourse.

SCENE V.

Enter VIOLETTA.

Bel. jun. Well, madam, melancholy still? still that face of sorrow and despair; twice shipwrecked, and twice rescued from the jaws of death, do you regret your preservation; and have I incurred your displeasure by prolonging your existence?

Vio. Not so, Mr Lewson: such ingratitude be far from me: can I forget when the vessel, in which I had sailed from Portugal, foundered by your side, with what noble, what benevolent ardour you flew to my assistance? Regardful only of my safety, your own seemed no part of your care.

Bel. jun. Oh! no more of this; the preservation of a fellow-creature is as natural as self-defence: you now, for the first time in your life, breathe the air of England—a rough reception it has given you; but be not therefore discouraged; our hearts, Violetta, are more accessible than our shores; nor can you find inhospitality in Britain, save in our climate only.

Vio. These characteristics of the English may be just; I take my estimate from a less favourable example.

Bel. jun. Villainy, madam, is the growth of every soil; nor can I, while yonder habitation is in my view, forget that England has given birth to monsters that disgrace humanity; but this I will say for my countrymen, that, where you can point out one rascal with a heart to wrong you, I will produce fifty honest fellows ready and resolute to redress you.

Vio. Ah! But on what part of the English coast is it that we are now landed?

Bel. jun. On the coast of Cornwall.

Vio. Of Cornwall, is it? you seem to know the owner of that house: are you well acquainted with the country hereabouts?

Bel. jun. Intimately; it has been the cradle of my infancy, and, with little interruption, my residence ever since.

Vio. You are amongst your friends, then, no doubt; how fortunate is it, that you will have their consolation and assistance in your distress.

Bell. jun. Madam——

Vio. Every moment will bring them down to the very shores; this brave, humane, this hospitable people will flock, in crowds, to your relief; your friends, Mr Lewson——

Bel. jun. My friends, Violetta! must I confess it to you, I have no friends—those rocks, that have thus scattered my treasure, those waves, that have devoured them, to me are not so fatal, as hath been that man, whom Nature meant to be my nearest friend.

Vio. What, and are you a fellow-sufferer then? Is this the way you reconcile me to your nation? Are these the friends of human kind? Why don't we fly from this ungenerous, this ungrateful country?

Bel. jun. Hold, madam! one villain, however base, can no more involve a whole nation in his crimes, than one example, however dignified, can inspire it with his virtues: thank Heaven, the worthless owner of that mansion is yet without a rival.

Vio. You have twice directed my attention to that house; 'tis a lovely spot; what pity that so delicious a retirement should be made the residence of so undeserving a being!

Bel. jun. It is indeed a charming place, and was once the seat of hospitality and honour; but its present possessor, Andrew Belfield——Madam, for Heaven's sake what ails you? you seem suddenly disordered—Have I said——

Vio. No, 'tis nothing; don't regard me, Mr Lewson; I am weak, and subject to these surprises; I shall be glad, however, to retire.

Bel. jun. A little repose, I hope, will relieve you; within this hut some accommodation may be found; lean on my arm.

[*Leads her to the door of the cabin.*

SCENE VI.

Enter GOODWIN.

Good. Heaven defend me! do my eyes deceive me? 'tis wonderous like his shape, his air, his look——

Bel. jun. What is your astonishment, friend?

Do you know me? If it was not for that habit, I should say your name is Goodwin.

Good. 'Tis he; he is alive! my dear young master, Mr Belfield! Yes, sir, my name is Goodwin: however changed my appearance, my heart is still the same, and overflows with joy at this unexpected meeting.

Bel. jun. Give me thy hand, my old, my honest friend; and is this sorry hole thy habitation?

Good. It is.

Bel. jun. The world, I see, has frowned on thee since we parted.

Good. Yes, sir: but what are my misfortunes? you must have undergone innumerable hardships, and now, at last, shipwrecked on your own coast! Well, but your vessel is not totally lost, and we will work night and day in saving your effects.

Bel. jun. Oh, as for that, the sea gave all, let it take back a part; I have enough on shore not to envy my brother his fortune. But there is one blessing, master Goodwin, I own I should grudge him the possession of——There was a young lady——

Good. What, sir, haven't you forgot Miss Sophia?

Bel. jun. Forgot her! my heart trembles while I ask you, if she is indeed, as you call her, Miss Sophia?

Good. She is yet unmarried, though every day we expect——

Bel. jun. 'Tis enough; fortune, I acquit thee! —Happy be the winds that threw me on this coast, and blest the rocks that received me! Let my vessel go to pieces; she has done her part in bearing me hither, while I can cast myself at the feet of my Sophia, recount to her my unabating passion, and have one fair struggle for her heart. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII.

Enter VIOLETTA.

Vio. Once more I am alone. How my heart sunk when Lewson pronounced the name of Belfield! It must be he, it must be my false, cruel, yet (spite of all my wrongs) beloved husband: yes, there he lives, each circumstance confirms it; Cornwall, the county; here the sea-coast, and these white craggy cliffs; there the disposition of his seat; the grove, lake, lawn; every feature of the landscape tallies with the descriptions he has given me of it. What shall I do, and to whom shall I complain? When Lewson spoke of him, it was with a bitterness that shocked me; I will not disclose myself to him: by what fell from him, I suspect he is related to Mr Belfield—But, hush, I talk to these rocks, and forget that they have ears.

Enter FANNY.

Fan. Are you any better, madam? Is the air of any service to you?

Vio. I am much relieved by it: the beauty of that place attracted my attention, and, if you please, we will walk further up the hill to take a nearer view of it. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII.

Part of the Crew enter, with IRONSIDES *and* SKIFF *in the midst of them.*

Omnes. Huzza, huzza, huzza!

1 *Sail.* Long life to your honour! welcome ashore, noble captain.

2 *Sail.* Avast there, Jack; stand clear, and let his old honour pass; bless his heart, he looks cheerly howsomever; let the world wag as it will, he'll never flinch.

3 *Sail.* Not he! he's true English oak to the heart of him; and a fine old seaman-like figure he is.

Iron. Ah, messmates, we're all aground! I have been taking a parting cup with the Charming Sally—She's gone; but the stoutest bark must have an end; master here and I did all we could to lighten her; we took leave of her in an officer-like manner.

1 *Sail.* Hang sorrow; we know the worst on't; 'tis only taking a fresh cruize; and, for my part, I'll sail with Captain Ironsides as far as there's water to carry me.

Omnes. So we will all.

Iron. Say ye so, my hearts? if the wind sits that way, hoist sail, say I; old George will make one amongst you, if that be all; I hate an idle life—So, so: away to your work: to-morrow we'll make a day on't. [*Exeunt Sailors.*

SCENE IX.

IRONSIDES *and* SKIFF.

Iron. Skiff!

Skiff. Here, your honour.

Iron. I told you, Skiff, how 'twould be; if you had luff'd up in time, as I would have had you, and not made so free with the land, this mishap had never come to pass.

Skiff. Lord love you, Captain Ironsides, 'twas a barrel of beef to a biscuit, the wind had not shifted so direct contrary as it did; who could have thought it?

Iron. Why I could have thought it; every body could have thought it: do you consider whereabouts you are, mun? Upon the coast of England, as I take it. Every thing here goes contrary both by sea and land——Every thing whips, and chops, and changes about like mad in this country; and the people, I think, are as full of vagaries as the climate.

Skiff. Well, I could have swore——

Iron. Ay, so you could, Skiff, and so you did, pretty roundly too; but for the good you did by it, you might as well have puffed a whiff of tobacco in the wind's face.

Skiff. Well, captain, though we have lost our ship, we haven't lost our all: thank the fates we've saved treasure enough to make all our fortunes notwithstanding.

Iron. Fortunes, quotha? What have two such old weather-beaten fellows, as thee and I are, to do with fortune; or, indeed, what has fortune to

do with us? Flip and tobacco is the only luxury we have any relish for: had we fine houses, could we live in 'em? a greasy hammock has been our birth for these fifty years; fine horses, could we ride 'em? and as for the fair sex there, that my nephew makes such a pother about, I don't know what thou may'st think of the matter, Skiff, but, for my own part, I should not care if there were no such animals in the creation.

SCENE X.

IRONSIDES, SKIFF, *and* BELFIELD *Junior.*

Bel. jun. Uncle; what cheer, man?

Iron. Oh, Bob, is it thee? whither bound now, my dear boy?

Bel. jun. Why, how can you ask such a question? We have landed our treasure, saved all our friends, and set foot upon English ground, and what business, think you, can a young fellow like me have, but one?

Iron. Pshaw, you're a fool, Bob! these wenches will be the undoing of you; a plague of 'em altogether, say I! what are they good for, but to spoil company, and keep brave fellows from their duty? O' my conscience, they do more mischief to the king's navy in one twelvemonth, than the French have done in ten; a pack of—but I ha' done with 'em; thank the stars, I have fairly washed my hands of 'em, I have nothing to say to none of 'em.

Skiff. Mercy be good unto us! that my wife could but hear your worship talk.

Bel. jun. Oh, my dear uncle——

Iron. But I'll veer away no more good advice after you, so even drive as you will under your petticoat sails;—black, brown, fair, or tawny, 'tis all fish that comes in your net: why, where's your reason, Bob, all this here while? Where's your religion, and be damned to you?

Bel. jun. Come, come, my dear uncle, a truce to your philosophy. Go, throw your dollars into yonder ocean, and bribe the tempest to be still; you shall as soon reverse the operations of nature, as wean my heart from my Sophia.

Iron. Hold, hold, take me right; if, by Sophia, you mean the daughter of Sir Benjamin Dove, I don't care if I make one with you; what say'st thou, boy, shall it be so?

Bel. jun. So then you think there may be one good woman, however?

Iron. Just as I think there may be one honest Dutchman, one sober German, or one righteous methodist. Look'e, Bob so I do but keep single, I have no objection to other people's marrying; but, on these occasions, I would manage myself as I would my ship; not by running her into every odd creek and cranny, in the smuggling fashion, as if I had no good credentials to produce; but play fairly and in sight, d'ye see; and whenever a safe harbour opens, stand boldly in, boy, and lay her up snug, in a good birth, once for all.

Bel. jun. Come then, uncle, let us about it; and you may greatly favour my enterprise, since you can keep the father and mother in play, while I——

Iron. Avast, young man, avast! the father, if you please, without the mother; Sir Benjamin's a passable good companion, for a land-man; but for my lady—— I'll have nothing to say to my lady; she's his wife, thank the stars, and not mine.

Bel. jun. Be it as you will, I shall be glad of your company on any terms.

Iron. Say no more then. About ship; if you are bound for that port, I'm your mate: master, look to the wreck, I'm for a fresh cruize.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The outside of Sir* BENJAMIN DOVE'S *House.*

Enter BELFIELD *Senior and* LUCY WATERS.

Lucy. What, don't I know you? haven't you been to me of all mankind the basest?

Bel. sen. Not yet, Lucy.

Lucy. Sure, Mr Belfield, you won't pretend to deny it to my face?

Bel. sen. To thy face, child, I will not pretend that I can deny any thing; you are much too handsome to be contradicted.

Lucy. Pish!

Bel. sen. So! so!

Lucy. Haven't you, faithless as you are, promised me marriage over and over again?

Bel. sen. Repeatedly.

Lucy. And you have now engaged yourself to the daughter of Sir Benjamin Dove, have you not?

Bel. sen. Assuredly.

Lucy. Let me demand of you then, Mr Belfield, since you had no honourable designs towards me yourself, why you prevented those of an humbler lover, young Philip, the son of your late tenant, poor Goodwin?

Bel. sen. For the very reason you state in your question; because I had no honourable designs, and he had: you disappointed my hopes, and I was resolved to defeat his.

Lucy. And this you thought reason sufficient to expel his father from your farm; to persecute him and his innocent family till you had accom-

plished their ruin, and driven them to the very brink of the ocean for their habitation and subsistence?

Bel. sen. Your questions, Miss Lucy, begin to be impertinent.

Lucy. Oh, do they touch you, sir? but I'll waste no more time with you; my business is with your Sophia; here, in the very spot which you hope to make the scene of your guilty triumphs, will I expose you to her; set forth your inhuman conduct to your unhappy brother; and detect the mean artifices you have been driven to, in order to displace him in her affections.

Bel. sen. You will?

Lucy. I will, be assured; so let me pass.

Bel. sen. Stay, Lucy, understand yourself a little better: didn't you pretend to Sophia that my brother paid his addresses to you; that he had pledged himself to marry you; nay, that he had—

Lucy. Hold, Mr Belfield, nor further explain a transaction, which, though it reflects shame enough upon me, that was your instrument, ought to cover you, who was principal in the crime, with treble confusion and remorse.

Bel. sen. True, child, it was rather a disreputable transaction; and 'tis therefore fit no part of it should rest with me: I shall disavow it altogether.

Lucy. Incredible confidence!

Bel. sen. We shall see who will meet most belief in the world, you or I; choose, therefore, your part: if you keep my secret, you make me your friend; if you betray it, you have me for your enemy; and a fatal one you shall find me. Now enter, if you think fit; there lies your way to Sophia. [*She goes into the house.*] So! how am I to parry this blow?—what plea shall I use with Sophia?—'twas the ardour of my love——any thing will find pardon with a woman, that conveys flattery to her charms.—After all, if the worst should happen, and I be defeated in this match, so shall I be saved from doing that, which, when done, 'tis probable I may repent of; and I have some intimations from within, which tell me that it will be so: I perceive that, in this life, he who is checked by the rubs of compunction, can never arrive at the summit of prosperity.

SCENE II.

BELFIELD *Senior and* PATERSON.

Pat. What, melancholy, Mr Belfield? So near your happiness, and so full of thought?

Bel. sen. Happiness, what's that?

Pat. I'll tell you, sir; the possession of a lovely girl, with fifty thousand pounds in her lap, and twice fifty thousand virtues in her mind; this I call happiness, as much as mortal man can merit: and this, as I take it, you are destined to enjoy.

Bel. sen. That is not so certain, Mr Paterson; would you believe it, that perverse hussy, Lucy Waters, who left me but this minute, threatens to transverse all my hopes, and is gone this instant to Sophia with that resolution?

Pat. Impossible! how is Miss Waters provided or provoked to do this?

Bel. sen. Why, 'tis a foolish story, and scarce worth relating to you; but you know, when your letters called me home from Portugal, I found my younger brother in close attendance on Miss Dove; and, indeed, such good use had the fellow made of his time in my absence, that I found it impossible to counterwork his operations by fair and open approaches; so, to make short of the story, I took this girl, Lucy Waters, into partnership, and, by a happy device, ruined him with Sophia.

Pat. This, Mr Belfield, I neither know, nor wish to know.

Bel. sen. Let it pass then; defeated in these views, my brother, as you know, betook himself to the desperate course of privateering, with that old tar-barrel my uncle: what may have been his fate, I know not, but I have found it convenient to propagate a report of his death.

Pat. I am sorry for it, Mr Belfield; I wish nothing was convenient that can be thought dishonourable.

Bel. sen. Nature, Mr Paterson, never put into a human composition more candour and credulity than she did into mine; but acquaintance with life has shewn me how impracticable these principles are; to live with mankind, we must live like mankind: was it a world of honesty, I should blush to be a man of art.

Pat. And do you dream of ever reaching your journey's end by such crooked paths as these are?

Bel. sen. And yet, my most sage moralist, wonderful as it may seem to thee, true it is notwithstanding, that, after having threaded all these byways and crooked alleys, which thy right-lined apprehension knows nothing of; after having driven my rival from the field, and being almost in possession of the spoil, still I feel a repugnance in me that almost tempts me to renounce my good fortune, and abandon a victory I have struggled so hard to obtain.

Pat. I guessed as much; 'tis your Violetta, 'tis your fair Portuguese, that counterworks your good fortune; and, I must own to you, it was principally to save you from that improvident attachment, that I wrote so pressingly for your return; but, though I have got your body in safe holding, your heart is still at Lisbon; and if you marry Miss Dove, 'tis because Violetta's fortune was demolished by the earthquake, and Sir Benjamin's stands safe upon *terra firma*.

Bel. sen. Pr'ythee, Paterson, don't be too hard upon me: sure you don't suspect that I am married to Violetta?

Pat. Married to Violetta! Now you grow much too serious, and 'tis time to put an end to the discourse. [*Exit.*

Bel. sen. And you grow much too quick-sighted, Mr Paterson, for my acquaintance. I think he does not quite suspect me of double-dealing in this business; and yet I have my doubts; his reply to my question was equivocal, and his departure abrupt—I know not what to think——This I know, that love is a deity, and avarice a devil; that Violetta is my lawful wife; and that Andrew Belfield is a villain! [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

PATERSON *passes over the Stage.*

Pat. All abroad this fine day—not a creature within doors.

Enter KITTY.

Kit. Mr Paterson! hist, Mr Paterson! a word in your ear, sweet sir.

Pat. Curse on't, she has caught me!—Well, Mrs Kitty.

Kit. Why, I have been hunting you all the house over; my lady's impatient to see you.

Pat. Oh, I'm my Lady Dove's most obedient servant—And what are her ladyship's commands, pray?

Kit. Fye, Mr Paterson; how should I know what her ladyship wants with you; but a secret it is, no doubt, for she desires you to come to her immediately in the garden, at the bottom of the yew-tree walk, next the warren.

Pat. The devil she does!——What a pity it is, Mrs Kitty, we cann't cure your lady of this turn for solitude; I wish you would go with me; your company, probably, will divert her from her contemplations; besides, I shall certainly mistake the place.

Kit. I go with you, Mr Paterson! a fine thing truly: I'd have you to know that my character is not to be trusted with young fellows in yew-tree walks, whatever my lady may think of the matter ——Besides, I've an assignation in another place. [*Exit.*

Pat. What a devilish dilemma am I in! Why, this is a peremptory assignation—Certain it is, there are some ladies that no wise man should be commonly civil to——Here have I been flattering myself that I was stroking a termagant into humour, and all the while have been betraying a tender victim into love. Love, love did I say? her ladyship's passion is a disgrace to the name—But what shall I do?—'tis a pitiful thing to run away from a victory; but 'tis frequently the case in precipitate successes; we conquer more than we have wit to keep, or ability to enjoy. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*Changes to the Yew-tree Walk.*

Enter BELFIELD *Junior.*

Bel. jun. Now could I but meet my Sophia—Where can she have hid herself?—Hush; Lady Dove, as I live!

Enter Lady DOVE.

Lady Dove. So, Mr Paterson, you're a pretty gentleman to keep a lady waiting here: why how you do stand!—Come, come, I shall expect a very handsome atonement for this indecorum—Why, what, let me look—Ah! who have we here?

Bel. jun. A man, madam; and though not your man, yet one as honest and as secret: come, come, my lady, I'm no tell-tale; be you but grateful, this goes no further.

Lady Dove. Lost and undone! young Belfield!

Bel. jun. The same; but be not alarmed; we both have our secrets; I am, like you, a votary to love: favour but my virtuous passion for Miss Dove, and take you your Paterson; I shall be silent as the grave.

Lady Dove. Humph!

Bel. jun. Nay, never hesitate; my brother, I know, had your wishes: but wherein has Nature favoured him more than me? And, since Fortune has now made my scale as heavy as his, why should you partially direct the beam?

Lady Dove. Well, if it is so, and that you promise not to betray me——But this accident has so discomposed me, (plague on't, say I!) don't press me any further at present; I must leave you; remember the condition of our agreement, and expect my friendship——Oh, I could tear your eyes out! [*Exit.*

Bel. jun. Well, Sir Benjamin, keep your own counsel if you are wise; I'll do as I would be done by; had I such a wife as Lady Dove, I should be very happy to have such a friend as Mr Paterson. [*Exit.*

SCENE V.

Enter SOPHIA DOVE *and* LUCY WATERS.

Lucy. If there is faith in woman, I have seen young Belfield; I have beheld his apparition; for what else could it be?

Soph. How? when? where? I shall faint with surprise.

Lucy. As I crossed the yew-tree walk, I saw him pass by the head of the canal towards the house. Alas! poor youth, the injuries I have done him have called him from his grave.

Soph. Injuries, Miss Waters! what injuries have you done him? Tell me; for therein, perhaps, I may be concerned.

Lucy. Deeply concerned you are; with the most penitent remorse I confess it to you, that his affections to you were pure, honest, and sincere. Yes, amiable Sophia, you was unrivall'd in his esteem; and I, who persuaded you to the contrary, am the basest, the falsest of woman kind; every syllable I told you of his engagements to me was a malicious invention: how could you be so blind to your own superiority, to give credit to the imposition, and suffer him to depart without an explanation? Oh, that villain, that villain, his brother, has undone us all!

Soph. Villain, do you call him? Whither would you transport my imagination? You hurry me with such rapidity from one surprise to another, that I know not where to fix, how to act, or what to believe.

Lucy. Oh, madam, he is a villain, a most accomplish'd one; and, if I can but snatch you from the snare he has spread for you, I hope it will, in some measure, atone for the injuries I have done to you, and to that unhappy youth, who now—O Heavens! I see him again; he comes this way; I cannot endure his sight; alive or dead, I must avoid him. [*Runs out.*

SCENE VI.

Enter BELFIELD *Junior.*

Bel. jun. Adorable Sophia! this transport overpays my labours.

Soph. Sir, Mr Belfield, is it you? Oh, support me!——

Bel. jun. With my life, thou loveliest of women! Behold your poor adventurer is returned; happy past compute, if his fate is not indifferent to you; rich beyond measure, if his safety is worthy your concern.

Soph. Release me, I beseech you: what have I done? Sure you are too generous to take advantage of my confusion.

Bel. jun. Pardon me, my Sophia; the advantages I take from your confusion are not to be purchased by the riches of the East: I would not forego the transport of holding you one minute in my arms for all that wealth and greatness have to give.

SCENE VII.

Enter Lady DOVE, *while* BELFIELD *Jun. is kneeling and embracing* SOPHIA.

L. Dove. Hey-day! what's here to do with you both?

Soph. Ah!—— [*Shrieks.*

Bel. jun. Confusion! Lady Dove here!

L. Dove. Yes, sir, Lady Dove is here, and will take care you shall have no more garden dialogues. On your knees too!——(The fellow was not half so civil to me.) Ridiculous! a poor beggarly swabber truly——As for you, Mrs——

Bel. jun. Hold, madam! as much of your fury and foul language as you please upon me, but not one hard word against that lady, or by Heavens——

L. Dove. Come, sir, none of your reprobate swearing, none of your sea-noises here; I would my first husband was alive, I would he was, for your sake. I am surprised, Miss Dove, you have no more regard for your reputation; a delicate swain truly you have chosen, just thrown ashore from the pitchy bowels of a shipwreck'd privateer. Go, go, get you in, for shame; your father shall know of these goings-on, depend on't: as for you, sir—— [*Exit* SOPHIA.

SCENE VIII.

As Lady DOVE *is going out,* BELFIELD *Jun. stops her.*

Bel. jun. A word with you, madam; is this fair dealing? what would you have said, if I had broke in thus upon you and Mr Paterson?

L. Dove. Mr Paterson! why, you rave; what is it you mean?

Bel. jun. Come, come, this is too ridiculous; you know your reputation is in my keeping; call to mind what passed between us a while ago, and the engagement you are under on that account.

L. Dove. Ha, ha, ha!

Bel. jun. Very well, truly; and you think to brave this matter out, do you?

L. Dove. Most assuredly; and shall make Sir Benjamin call you to account, if you dare to breathe a word against my reputation: incorrigible coxcomb! to think I would keep any terms with you after such an event. Take my word for it, Belfield, you are come home no wiser than you went out; you missed the only advantage you might have taken of that rencounter, and now I set you at defiance: take heed to what you say, or look to hear from Sir Benjamin.

Bel. jun. Oh, no doubt on't: how can Sir Benjamin avoid fighting for your sake, when your ladyship has so liberally equipp'd him with weapons? [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE IX.—*A Hall.*

Enter JONATHAN *and* FRANCIS.

Jon. And so, sir, 'tis just as I tell you; every thing in this family goes according to the will of the lady: for my own part, I am one of those that hate trouble; I swim with the stream, and make my place as easy as I can.

Fran. Your looks, Mr Jonathan, convince me that you live at your ease.

Jon. I do so: and therefore, (in spite of the old proverb, 'Like master, like man,') you never saw two people more different than I and Sir Benjamin Dove. He, Lord help him, is a little peaking, puling thing; I am a jolly, portable man, as you see. It so happened that we both became widowers at the same time; I knew when I was well, and have continued single ever since. He fell into the clutches of——Hark, sure I hear my lady——

Fran. No, it was nothing. When did the poor gentleman light upon this termagant?

Jon. Lack-a-day, 'twas here at the borough of Knavestown, when master had the great contest with 'Squire Belfield, about three years ago: her first husband, Mr Searcher, was a king's messenger, as they call it, and came down express from a great man about court during the poll; he caught a surfeit, as ill-luck would have it, at the election dinner: and, before he died, his wife, that's now my lady, came down to see him; then it was master fell in love with her: egad, 'twas the unluckiest job of all his life.

Sir Ben. [*Calls without.*] Jonathan! why Jonathan!

Fran. Hark, you are called.

Jon. Ay, ay, 'tis only my master; my lady tells the servants not to mind what Sir Benjamin says, and I love to do as I am bid.

Fran. Well, honest Jonathan, if you won't move, I must; by this time I hope my young master is happy with your young mistress. [*Exit.*

SCENE X.

Enter Sir BENJAMIN DOVE.

Sir Ben. Why, Jonathan, I say. Oh, are you here? Why couldn't you come when I called you?

Jon. Lack-a-day, sir, you don't consider how much easier it is for you to call than me to come.

Sir Ben. I think, honest Jonathan, when I first knew you, you was a parish orphan; I 'prenticed you out; you run away from your master; I took you into my family; you married; I set you up in a farm of my own, stocked it; you paid me no rent: I received you again into my service, or rather, I should say, my lady's. Are these things so, or does my memory fail me, Jonathan?

Jon. Why, to be sure, I partly remember somewhat of what your worship mentions.

Sir Ben. If you partly remember something of all this, Jonathan, don't entirely forget to come when I call.

Iron. [*Without.*] Hoy there! within! what, nobody stirring! all hands asleep! all under the hatches!

Sir Ben. Hey-day, who the dickens have we got here?—Old Captain Ironsides as I am a sinner; who could have thought of this?—Run to the door, good Jonathan—nay, hold, there's no escaping now:——What will become of me?—he'll ruin every thing; and throw the whole house into confusion.

Enter Captain IRONSIDES.

Iron. What, Sir Ben! my little knight of Malta! give me a buss, my boy. Hold, hold! sure I'm out of my reckoning: let me look a little nearer; why, what mishap has befallen you, that you heave out these signals of distress?

Sir Ben. I'm heartily glad to see thee, my old friend; but a truce to your sea-phrases, for I don't understand them: What signals of distress have I about me?

Iron. Why, that white flag there at your main topmast head: in plain English, what dost do with that clout about thy pate?

Sir Ben. Clout do you call it? 'Tis a little *en dishabilie*, indeed: but there's nothing extraordinary, I take it, in a man's wearing his gown and cap in a morning; 'tis the dress I usually choose to study in.

Iron. And this hall is your library, is it? Ah! my old friend, my old friend! But come, I want to have a little chat with you, and thought to have dropt in at pudding-time, as they say; for though it may be morning with thee, Sir Ben, 'tis mid-day with the rest of the world.

Sir Ben. Indeed; is it so late?——But I was fallen upon an agreeable tête-a-tête with Lady Dove, and hardly knew how the time passed.

Iron. Come, come, 'tis very clear how your time has passed; but what occasion is there for this fellow's being privy to our conversation—Why don't the lubber stir? What does the fat lazy oaf stand staring at?

Sir Ben. What shall I say now?——Was ever any thing so distressing?——Why, that's Jonathan, captain; don't you remember your old friend Jonathan?

Jon. I hope your honour's in good health; I'm glad to see your honour come home again.

Iron. Honest Jonathan, I came to visit your master, and not you: if you'll go and hasten dinner, and bring Sir Benjamin his periwig and clothes, you'll do me a very acceptable piece of service; for, to tell you the truth, my friend, I haven't had a comfortable meal of fresh provision this many a day. [*Exit* JONATHAN.

Sir Ben. 'Foregad you're come to the wrong house to find one. [*Aside.*

Iron. And so, Sir Knight, knowing I was welcome, and having met with a mishap here, upon your coast, I am come to taste your good cheer, and pass an evening with you over a tiff of punch.

Sir Ben. The devil you are! [*Aside.*] This is very kind of you: there is no man in England, Captain Ironsides, better pleased to see his friends about him than I am.

Iron. Ay, ay, if I didn't think I was welcome, I shou'dn't ha' come.

Sir Ben. You may be assured you are welcome.

Iron. I am assured.

Sir Ben. You are, by my soul; take my word for it, you are.

Iron. Well, well, what need of all this ceremony about a meal's meat? Who doubts you?

Sir Ben. You need not doubt me, believe it; I'll only step out, and ask my lady what time she has ordered dinner; or whether she has made any engagement I'm not apprized of.

Iron. No, no; engagement!——How can that be, and you in this pickle?——Come, come, sit down; dinner won't come the quicker for your enquiry: and now tell me, how does my god-daughter Sophia?

Sir Ben. Thank you heartily, captain; my daughter's well in health.

Iron. That's well; and how fares your fine new wife?——How goes on matrimony?—Fond as ever, my little amorous Dove; always billing, always cooing?

Sir Ben. No, captain, no; we are totally altered in that respect; we shew no fondness now before company; my lady is so delicate in that particular, that, from the little notice she takes of me in public, you would scarce believe we were man and wife.

Iron. Ha, ha, ha! why, 'tis the very circumstance that would confirm it; but I'm glad to hear it; for, of all things under the sun, I most nauseate your nuptial familiarities; and, though you remember I was fool enough to dissuade you from this match, I'm rejoiced to hear you manage so well and so wisely.

Sir Ben. No man happier in this life, captain, no man happier; one thing is only wanting; had the kind stars but crowned our endearments—

Iron. What, my lady don't breed then?

Sir Ben. Hush, hush! for Heaven's sake, don't speak so loud; should my lady overhear you, it might put strange things into her head;—oh! she is a lady of delicate spirits; tender nerves, quite weak and tender nerves; a small matter throws her down; gentle as a lamb; starts at a straw; speak loud, and it destroys her: oh! my friend, you are not used to deal with women's constitutions; these hypocondriac cases require a deal of management; 'tis but charity to humour them, and you cannot think what pains it requires to keep them always quiet and in temper.

Iron. Ay, like enough; but here comes my lady, and in excellent temper, if her looks don't belie her.

SCENE XI.

Enter Lady DOVE.

Lady Dove. What's to do now, Sir Benjamin? ——What's the matter that you send for your clothes in such a hurry? Cann't you be contented to remain as you are? Your present dress is well enough to stay at home in, and I don't know that you have any call out of doors.

Iron. Gentle as a lamb, Sir Benjamin.

Sir Ben. This attention of yours, my dear, is beyond measure flattering! I am infinitely beholden to you; but you are so taken up with your concern on my account, that you overlook our old friend and neighbour, Captain Ironsides.

Lady Dove. Sir Benjamin, you make yourself quite ridiculous: this folly is not to be endured; you are enough to tire the patience of any woman living.

Sir Ben. She's quite discomposed, all in a flutter, for fear I should take cold by changing my dress.

Iron. Yes, I perceive she has exceeding weak nerves. You are much in the right to humour her.

Lady Dove. Sir Benjamin Dove, if you mean that I should stay a minute longer in this house, I insist upon your turning that old porpoise out of it: is it not enough to bring your nauseous sea companions within these doors, but must I be compelled to entertain 'em? Foh! I sha'n't get the scent of his tar-jacket out of my nostrils this fortnight.

Sir Ben. Hush, my dear Lady Dove! for Heaven's sake, don't shame and expose me in this manner! how can I possibly turn an honest gentleman out of my doors, who has given me no offence in life?

Lady Dove. Marry, but he has though, and great offence too; I tell you, Sir Benjamin, you are made a fool of.

Sir Ben. Nay, now, my dear sweet love, be composed.

Lady Dove. Yes, forsooth, and let a young rambling, raking prodigal run away with your daughter.

Sir Ben. How, what!

Lady Dove. A fine thing, truly, to be composed——

Iron. Who is it your ladyship suspects of such a design?

Lady Dove. Who, sir? why, who but your nephew Robert! You flattered us with a false hope he was dead; but, to our sorrow, we find him alive, and returned: and now you are cajoling this poor simple, unthinking man, while your wild Indian, your savage there, is making off with his daughter.

Sir Ben. Mercy on us! what am I to think of all this?

Iron. What are you to think! Why that it is a lie; that you are an ass; and that your wife is a termagant. My nephew is a lad of honour, and scorns to run away with any man's daughter, or wife either, though, I think, there's little danger of that here—As for me, sooner than mess with such a vixen, I'd starve: and so, Sir Benjamin, I wish you a good stomach to your dinner. [*Exit.*

SCENE XII.

Sir BENJAMIN DOVE *and Lady* DOVE.

Lady Dove. Insolent, unmannerly brute! was ever the like heard? And you to stand tamely by: I declare I've a great mind to raise the servants upon him, since I have no other defenders. Thus am I for ever treated by your scurvy companions.

Sir Ben. Be pacified, my dear; am I in fault? But, for Heaven's sake, what is become of my daughter?

Lady Dove. Yes, you can think of your daughter; but she is safe enough for this turn; I have taken care of her for one while, and thus I am rewarded for it. Am I a vixen, am I a termagant? Oh, had my first husband, had my poor, dear, dead Mr Searcher heard such a word, he would have rattled him——But he,—What do I talk of? he was a man: yes, yes, he was, indeed, a man——As for you——

Sir Ben. Strain the comparison no farther, Lady Dove; there are particulars, I dare say, in which I fall short of Mr Searcher.

Lady Dove. Short of him! I'll tell you what, Sir Benjamin, I valued the dear greyhound that hung at his button-hole more than I do all the foolish trinkets your vanity has lavished on me.

Sir Ben. Your ladyship, doubtless, was the paragon of wives: I well remember, when the poor man laid ill at my borough of Knavestown, how you came flying on the wings of love, by the Exeter waggon, to visit him before he died.

Lady Dove. I understand your sneer, sir, and I despise it: there is one condition only upon which you may regain my forfeited opinion; young Belfield, who, with this old fellow, has designs in hand of a dangerous nature, has treated me with

an indignity still greater than what you have now been a witness to. Shew yourself a man upon this occasion, Sir Benjamin.

Sir Ben. Any thing, dearest, for peace sake.

Lady Dove. Peace sake! It is war, and not peace, which I require——But come, if you will walk this way, I'll lay the matter open to you. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Sea-shore before* GOODWIN'S *Cabin. Enter* VIOLETTA *and* FANNY.

Vio. And when is this great match of Mr Belfield's to be?

Fan. Alas! madam, we look to hear of it every day.

Vio. You seem to consider this event, child, as a misfortune to yourself: however others may be affected by Mr Belfield's marrying Miss Dove, to you I conceive it must be matter of indifference.

Fan. I have been taught, madam, to consider no event as matter of indifference to me, by which good people are made unhappy. Miss Sophy is the best young lady living; Mr Belfield is———

Vio. Hold, Fanny; do step into the house; in my writing-box you will find a letter sealed, but without a direction, bring it to me. [*Exit* FANNY.] I have been writing to this base man, for I want fortitude to support an interview. What, if I unbosom myself to this girl, and intrust the letter to her conveyance? She seems exceedingly honest, and, for one of so mean a condition, uncommonly sensible: I think I may safely confide in her——Well, Fanny.

Enter FANNY.

Fan. Here is your letter, madam.

Vio. I thank you; I trouble you too much; but thou art a good-natured girl, and your attention to me shall not go unrewarded.

Fan. I am happy to wait upon you; I wish I could do or say any thing to divert you; but my discourse cann't be very amusing to a lady of your sort; and talking of this wedding seems to have made you more melancholy than you was before.

Vio. Come hither, child; you have remarked my disquietude, I will now disclose to you the occasion of it: you seem interested for Miss Dove; I too am touched with her situation: you tell me she is the best young lady living.

Fan. Oh! madam, if it were possible for an angel to take a human shape, she must be one.

Vio. 'Tis very well; I commend your zeal; you are speaking now of the qualities of her mind.

Fan. Not of them alone: she has not only the virtues, but the beauties of an angel.

Vio. Indeed! Pray tell me, is she so very handsome?

Fan. As fine a person as you could wish to see.

Vio. Tall?

Fan. About your size, or rather taller.

Vio. Fair or dark complexion?

Fan. Of a most lovely complexion, 'tis her greatest beauty, and all pure nature, I'll be answerable; then her eyes are so soft, and so smiling; and, as for her hair———

Vio. Hey-day! why, where are you rambling, child? I am satisfied; I make no doubt she is a consummate beauty, and that Mr Belfield loves her to distraction. [*Aside.*] I don't like this girl so well as I did; she is a great talker; I am glad I did not disclose my mind to her; I'll go in and determine on some expedient. [*Exit.*

Fan. Alas! poor lady! as sure as can be she has been crossed in love; nothing in this world besides could make her so miserable. But sure I see Mr Francis; if falling in love leads to misfortunes, 'tis fit I should get out of his way. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Enter FRANCIS *and* PHILIP.

Fran. Wasn't that your sister, Philip, that ran into the cabin?

Phil. I think it was.

Fran. You've made a good day's work on't: the weather coming about so fair, I think we've scarce lost any thing of value but the ship; didn't you meet the old captain as you came down to the creek?

Phil. I did; he has been at Sir Benjamin Dove's here, at Cropley Castle, and is come back in a curious humour.

Fran. So! so! I attended my young master thither at the same time: how came they not to return together?

Phil. That I cann't tell.—Come, let's go in and refresh ourselves. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter SOPHIA DOVE *and* LUCY WATERS.

Soph. Indeed, and indeed, Miss Lucy Waters, these are strong facts which you tell me; and, I do believe, no prudent woman would engage with a man of Mr Andrew Belfield's disposition: but what course am I to follow; and how am I to extricate myself from the embarrassments of my situation?

Lucy. Truly, madam, you have but one refuge that I know of.

Soph. And that lies in the arms of a young adventurer. O Lucy, Lucy! this is a flattering prescription, calculated rather to humour the patient, than to remove the disease.

Lucy. Nay, but if there is a necessity for your taking this step——

Soph. Ay, necessity is grown strangely commodious of late, and always compels us to do the very thing we have most a mind to.

Lucy. Well, madam, but common humanity to young Mr Belfield——You must allow he has been hardly treated.

Soph. By me, Lucy?

Lucy. Madam!——No, madam, not by you; but 'tis charity to heal the wounded, though you have not been a party in the fray.

Soph. I grant you!——You are a true female philosopher; you would let charity recommend you a husband, and a husband recommend you to charity—But I won't reason upon the matter; at least, not in the humour I am now: nor at this particular time: no, Lucy, nor in this particular spot: here it was, at this very hour yesterday, young Belfield surprised me.

Lucy. And see, madam, punctual to the same lucky moment, he comes again; let him plead his own cause; you need fear no interruption; my lady has too agreeable an engagement of her own to endeavour at disturbing those of other people.

[*Exit* LUCY.

SCENE IV.

Enter BELFIELD *Junior.*

Bel. jun. Have I then found thee, loveliest of women? O! Sophia, report has struck me to the heart; if, as I am told, to-morrow gives you to my brother, this is the last time I am ever to behold you.

Soph. Why so, Mr Belfield? Why should our separation be a necessary consequence of our alliance?

Bel. jun. Because I have been ambitious, and cannot survive the pangs of disappointment.

Soph. Alas! poor man! but you know where to bury your disappointments; the sea is still open to you; and, take my word for it, Mr Belfield, the man who can live three years, ay, or three months, in separation from the woman of his heart, need be under no apprehensions for his life, let what will befal her.

Bel. jun. Cruel, insulting Sophia! when I last parted from you, I flattered myself I had left some impression on your heart——But in every event of my life, I meet a base, injurious brother; the everlasting bar to my happiness—I can support it no longer; and Mr Belfield, madam, never can, never shall, be yours.

Soph. How, sir! never shall be mine! What do you tell me? There is but that man on earth with whom I can be happy; and if my fate is such, that he is never to be mine, the world, and all that it contains, will for ever after be indifferent to me.

Bel. jun. I have heard enough; farewell!

Soph. Farewell, sagacious Mr Belfield; the next fond female, who thus openly declares herself to you, will, I hope, meet with a more gallant reception than I have done.

Bel. jun. How, what! is't possible? O Heavens!

Soph. What, you've discovered it at last? Oh, fie upon you!

Bel. jun. Thus, thus, let me embrace my unexpected blessing! come to my heart, my fond o'erflowing heart, and tell me once again that my Sophia will be only mine.

Soph. O man, man! all despondency one moment, all rapture the next! No question now, but you conceive every difficulty surmounted, and that we have nothing to do but to run into each other's arms, make a fashionable elopement, and be happy for life; and I must own to you, Belfield, was there no other condition of our union, even this project should not deter me; but I have better hopes, provided you will be piloted by me; for, believe me, my good friend, I am better acquainted with this coast than you are.

Bel. jun. I doubt not your discretion, and shall implicitly surrender myself to your guidance.

Soph. Give me a proof of it then by retreating from this place immediately; 'tis my father's hour for walking, and I would not have you meet; besides, your brother is expected.

Bel. jun. Ay, that brother, my Sophia, that brother brings vexation and regret whenever he is named; but I hope I need not dread a second injury in your esteem; and yet I know not how it is, but, if I were addicted to superstition——

Soph. And, if I were addicted to anger, I should quarrel with you for not obeying my injunctions with more readiness.

Bel. jun. I will obey thee, and yet 'tis difficult ——Those lips, which thus have blest me, cannot dismiss me without———

Soph. Nay, Mr Belfield, don't you——well then——mercy upon us! who's coming here?

Bel. jun. How, oh, yes! never fear; 'tis a friend; 'tis Violetta; 'tis a lady that I——

Soph. That you what, Mr Belfield?——What lady is it? I never saw her in my life before.

Bel. jun. No, she is a foreigner, born in Portugal, though of an English family: the packet in which she was coming to England founder'd alongside of our ship, and I was the instrument of saving her life: I interest myself much in her happiness, and I beseech you, for my sake, to be kind to her. [*Exit.*

Soph. He interests himself much in her happiness! he beseeches me, for his sake, to be kind to her!——What am I to judge of all this?

SCENE V.

Enter VIOLETTA.

Vio. Madam, I ask pardon for this intrusion; but I have business with you of a nature that—I presume I'm not mistaken, you are the young lady I have been directed to, the daughter of Sir Benjamin Dove?

Soph. I am, madam; but won't you please to repose yourself in the house? I understand you are a stranger in this country. May I beg to know what commands you have for me? Mr Belfield has made me acquainted with some circumstances relative to your story; and, for his sake, madam, I shall be proud to render you any service in my power.

Vio. For Mr Belfield's sake, did you say, madam? Has Mr Belfield named me to you, madam?

Soph. Is there any wonder in that, pray?

Vio. No, none at all. In any man else, such confidence would surprise me; but in Mr Belfield 'tis natural; there is no wondering at what he does.

Soph. You must pardon me: I find we think differently of Mr Belfield. He left me but this minute, and in the kindest terms recommended you to my friendship.

Vio. 'Twas he then that parted from you as I came up; I thought so; but I was too much agitated to observe him—and I am confident he is too guilty to dare to look upon me.

Soph. Why so, madam? For Heaven's sake, inform me what injuries you have received from Mr Belfield: I must own to you, I am much interested in finding him to be a man of honour

Vio. I know your situation, madam, and I pity it; Providence has sent me here, in time, to save you, and to tell you———

Soph. What? To tell me what? oh! speak, or I shall sink with apprehension.

Vio. To tell you, that he is——my husband.

Soph. Husband! your husband? What do I hear? Ungenerous, base, deceitful Belfield! I thought he seem'd confounded at your appearance; every thing confirms his treachery; and I cannot doubt the truth of what you tell me.

Vio. A truth it is, madam, that I must ever reflect on with the most sorrowful regret.

Soph. Come, let me beg you to walk towards the house: I ask no account of this transaction of Mr Belfield's; I would fain banish his name from my memory for ever, and you shall this instant be a witness to his peremptory dismission.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

Enter BELFIELD *Junior and* PATERSON.

Bel. jun. And so, sir, these are her ladyship's commands, are they?

Pat. This is what I am commissioned by Lady Dove to tell you: what report shall I make to her?

Bel. jun. Even what you please, Mr Paterson; mould it and model it to your liking; put as many palliatives, as you think proper, to sweeten it to her ladyship's taste; so you do but give her to understand that I neither can nor will abandon my Sophia.——Cease to think of her, indeed!—What earthly power can exclude her idea from my thoughts? I am surprised Lady Dove should think of sending me such a message; and I wonder, sir, that you should consent to bring it.

Pat. Sir!——

Bel. jun. Nay, Mr Paterson, don't assume such a menacing air; nor practise on my temper too far in this business. I know both your situation and my own; consider, sir, mine is a cause that would animate the most dastardly spirit; yours is enough to damp the most courageous. [*Exit.*

Pat. A very short and sententious gentleman; but there is truth in his remark; mine is but a sorry commission, after all; the man's in the right to fight for his mistress; she's worth the venture; and if there were no way else to be quit of mine, I should be in the right to fight too: egad, I don't see why aversion shou'dn't make me as desperate as love makes him. Hell and fury! here comes my Venus.

SCENE VII.

Enter Lady DOVE.

Lady Dove. Well, Paterson, what says the fellow to my message?

Pat. Says, madam! I'm ashamed to tell you what he says: he's the arrantest boatswain that ever I conversed with.

Lady Dove. But tell me what he says.

Pat. Every thing that scandal and scurrility can utter against you.

Lady Dove. Against me! What could he say against me?

Pat. Modesty forbids me to tell you.

Lady Dove. Oh! the vile reprobate! I, that have been so guarded in my conduct, so discreet in my partialities, as to keep 'em secret, even from my own husband; but, I hope, he didn't venture to abuse my person.

Pat. No, madam, no; had he proceeded to such lengths, I cou'dn't in honour have put up with it; I hope I have more spirit than to suffer any reflection upon your ladyship's personal accomplishments.

Lady Dove. Well; but did you say nothing in defence of my reputation?

Pat. Nothing.

Lady Dove. No!

Pat. Not a syllable! Trust me for that; 'tis the wisest way upon all tender topics to be silent; for he who takes upon him to defend a lady's reputation, only publishes her favours to the world; and therefore, I would always leave that office to a husband.

Lady Dove. 'Tis true; and if Sir Benjamin had any heart———

Pat. Come, come, my dear lady, don't be too severe upon Sir Benjamin; many men of no better appearance than Sir Benjamin have shewn themselves perfect heroes: I know a whole fa-

mily, that with the limbs of ladies, have the hearts of lions.——Who can tell but your husband may be one of this sort?

Lady Dove. Ah!——

Pat. Well, but try him; tell him how you have been used, and see what his spirit will prompt him to do.——Apropos! here the little gentleman comes; if he won't fight, 'tis but what you expect; if he will, who can tell where a lucky arrow may hit? [*Exit.*

SCENE VIII.

Enter Sir BENJAMIN DOVE.

Lady Dove. Sir Benjamin, I want to have a little discourse in private with you.

Sir Ben. With me, my lady?

Lady Dove. With you, Sir Benjamin; 'tis upon a matter of a very serious nature; pray sit down by me. I don't know how it is, my dear, but I have observed of late, with much concern, a great abatement in your regard for me.

Sir Ben. Oh, fie, my lady, why do you think so? What reason have you for so unkind a suspicion?

Lady Dove. 'Tis in vain for you to deny it; I am convinced you have done loving me.

Sir Ben. Well now, I vow, my dear, as I am a sinner, you do me wrong.

Lady Dove. Look'e, Sir Benjamin, love like mine is apt to be quick-sighted; and, I am persuaded, I am not deceived in my observation.

Sir Ben. Indeed, and indeed, my Lady Dove, you accuse me wrongfully.

Lady Dove. Mistake me not, my dear, I do not accuse you; I accuse myself; I am sensible there are faults and imperfections in my temper.

Sir Ben. Oh! trifles, my dear; mere trifles.

Lady Dove. Come, come, I know you have led but an uncomfortable life of late, and I am afraid I have been innocently, in some degree, the cause of it.

Sir Ben. Far be it from me to contradict your ladyship, if you are pleased to say so.

Lady Dove. I am sure it has been as I say; my over-fondness for you has been troublesome and vexatious; you hate confinement, I know you do; you are a man of spirit, and formed to figure in the world.

Sir Ben. Oh! you flatter me.

Lady Dove. Nay, nay, there's no disguising it; you sigh for action; your looks declare it: this alteration in your habit and appearance puts it out of doubt; there is a certain quickness in your eye; 'twas the first symptom that attracted my regard; and I am mistaken, Sir Benjamin, if you don't possess as much courage as any man.

Sir Ben. Your ladyship does me honour.

Lady Dove. I do you justice, Sir Benjamin.

Sir Ben. Why, I believe, for the matter of courage, I have as much as my neighbours; but 'tis of a strange perverse quality; for, as some spirits rise with the difficulties they are to encounter, my courage, on the contrary, is always greatest when there is least call for it.

Lady Dove. Oh! you shall never make me believe this, Sir Benjamin; you cou'dn't bear to see me ill used, I'm positive you cou'dn't.

Sir Ben. 'Tis as well, however, not to be too sure of that. [*Aside.*

Lady Dove. You cou'dn't be so mean-spirited, as to stand by and hear your poor dear wife abused and insulted, and——

Sir Ben. Oh! no, by no means, 'twould break my heart; but who has abused you and insulted you, and——

Lady Dove. Who? Why, this young Belfield that I told you of.

Sir Ben. Oh! never listen to him; a woman of your years should have more sense than to mind what such idle young fleerers can say of you.

Lady Dove. [*Rising.*] My years, Sir Benjamin! ——Why, you are more intolerable than he is; but let him take his course; let him run away with your daughter; it shall be no further concern of mine to prevent him.

Sir Ben. No, my dear, I have done that effectually.

Lady Dove. How so, pray?

Sir Ben. By taking care he sha'n't run away with my estate at the same time. Some people lock their daughters up to prevent their eloping; I've gone a wiser way to work with mine, let her go loose, and locked up her fortune.

Lady Dove. And, o' my conscience, I believe you mean to do the same by your wife; turn her loose upon the world, as you do your daughter; leave her to the mercy of every freebooter; let her be vilified and abused; her honour, her reputation, mangled and torn by every paltry privateering fellow that fortune casts upon your coasts.

Sir Ben. Hold, my lady, hold! young Belfield didn't glance at your reputation, I hope, did he?

Lady Dove. Indeed but he did though, and therein I think every wife has a title to her husband's protection.

Sir Ben. True, my dear; 'tis our duty to plead, but yours to provide us with the brief.

Lady Dove. There are some insults, Sir Benjamin, that no man of spirit ought to put up with; and the imputation of being made a wittol of, is the most unpardonable of any.

Sir Ben. Right, my dear; even truth you know is not to be spoke at all times.

Lady Dove. How, sir! would you insinuate any thing to the disparagement of my fidelity? but choose your side, quarrel you must, either with him or with me.

Sir Ben. Oh! if that's the alternative, what a deal of time have we wasted!——Step with me into my library, and I'll pen him a challenge immediately. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The Cabin, with a View of the Sea, as before. Enter* PHILIP *and* LUCY WATERS.

Phil. How I have loved you, Lucy, and what I have suffered on your account, you know well enough; and you shou'dn't now, when I am struggling to forget you, come to put me in mind of past afflictions: go, go, leave me: I pray you leave me.

Lucy. Nay, Philip, but hear me.

Phil. Hear you, ungrateful girl! you know it has been all my delight to hear you, to see you, and to sit by your side; for hours have I done it; for whole days together: but those days are past: I must now labour for my livelihood; and, if you rob me of my time, you wrong me of my subsistence.

Lucy. O! Philip, I am undone if you don't protect me.

Phil. Ah! Lucy, that, I fear, is past prevention.

Lucy. No, Philip, no, I am innocent; and, therefore, persecuted by the most criminal of men: I have disclosed all Mr Belfield's artifices to Miss Sophia, and now am terrified to death; I saw him follow me out of the Park, as I was coming hither, and I dare not return home alone; indeed, Philip, I dare not.

Phil. Well, Lucy, step in with me, and fear nothing; I see the 'squire is coming.—He who can refuse his protection to a woman, may he never taste the blessings a woman can bestow! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter BELFIELD *Senior.*

Bel. sen. Ay, 'tis she! Confusion follow her! How perversely has she traversed my projects with Sophia!—By all that's resolute, I'll be revenged.—My brother too returned——Vexatious circumstance! there am I foiled again——Since first I stepped out of the path of honour, what have I obtained?—O treachery! treachery! if thou canst not in this world make us happy, better have remained that dull formal thing, an honest man, and trusted to what the future might produce.

Enter PHILIP.

Bel. sen. So, fellow, who are you?

Phil. A man, sir; an honest man.

Bel. sen. A saucy one, methinks.

Phil. The injurious are apt to think so; however I ask pardon: as your riches make you too proud, my honesty perhaps makes me too bold.

Bel. sen. O! I know you now; you are son to that old fellow I thought proper to discharge from my farm; please to betake yourself from the door of your cabin; there's a young woman within I must have a word with.

Phil. If 'tis Lucy Waters you would speak with—

Bel. sen. If, rascal! It is Lucy Waters I would speak with; that I will speak with; and, spite of your insolence, compel to answer whatever I please to ask, and go with me wherever I please to carry her.

Phil. Then, sir, I must tell you, poor as I am, she is under my protection: you see, sir, I am armed; you have no right to force an entrance here; and, while I have life, you never shall.

Bel. sen. Then be it at your peril, villain, if you oppose me. [*They fight.*

Enter PATERSON, *who beats down their swords.*

Pat. For shame, Mr Belfield! what are you about? Tilting with this peasant?

Bel. sen. Paterson, stand off.

Pat. Come, come, put up your sword.

Bel. sen. Damnation, sir! what do you mean? Do you turn against me?—Give way, or by my soul, I'll run you through.

Enter Captain IRONSIDES *and* SKIFF.

Iron. Hey-day! what the devil ails you all? I thought the whole ship's company had sprung a mutiny.——Master and I were taking a nap together for good fellowship; and you make such a damn'd clattering and clashing, there's no sleeping in peace for you.

Bel. sen. Come, Mr Paterson, will you please to bear me company, or stay with your new acquaintance?

Iron. Oh ho! my righteous nephew, is it you that are kicking up this riot? Why, you ungracious profligate, would you murder an honest lad in the door of his own house—his castle—his castellum?——Are these your fresh-water tricks?

Bel. sen. Your language, Captain Ironsides, savours strongly of your profession; and I hold both you, your occupation, and opinion, equally vulgar and contemptible.

Pat. Come, Mr Belfield, come: for Heaven's sake let us go home.

Iron. My profession! Why, what have you to say to my profession, you unsanctified whelp you? I hope 'tis an honest vocation to fight the enemies of one's country; you, it seems, are for murdering the friends; I trust, it is not for such a skip-jack as thee art to fleer at my profession Master, did'st ever hear the like?

Skiff. Never, captain, never: for my own part I am one of few words; but, for my own part, I always thought, that to be a brave seaman, like

your honour, was the greatest title an Englishman can wear.

Iron. Why so it is, Skiff: ahem!

Bel. sen. Well, sir, I leave you to the enjoyment of your honours; so your servant. Sirrah, I shall find a time for you. [BELFIELD *is going out.*

Iron. Hark'e, sir, come back, one more word! with you.

Bel. sen. Well, sir——

Iron. Your father was an honest gentleman: your mother, though I say it that should not say it, was an angel; my eyes ache when I speak of her: aren't you ashamed, sirrah, to disgrace such parents? My nephew Bob, your brother, is as honest a lad, and as brave as ever stept between stem and stern; a' has a few faults indeed, as who is free? But you, Andrew, you are as false as a quicksand, and as full of mischief as a fire-ship.

Bel. sen. Captain Ironsides, I have but little time to bestow on you; if you have nothing else to entertain me with, the sooner we part the better.

Iron. No, sir, one thing more, and I have done with you; they tell me you're parliament-man here for the borough of Knavestown: the Lord have mercy upon the nation, when such fellows as thou art are to be our law-makers!——For my own part, I can shift; I'll take shipping, and live in Lapland, and be dry-nurse to a bear, rather than dwell in a country where I am to be governed by such a thing as thou art.

Bel. sen. By your manners I should guess you had executed that office already; however, lose no time, fit out a new Charming Sally, and set sail for Lapland: 'tis the properest place for you to live in, and a bear the fittest companion for you to keep. [*Exeunt* BELFIELD *and* PATERSON.

Iron. Hark'e, Philip, I forgot to ask what all this stir was about?

Phil. Sir, if you please to walk in, I will inform you.

Iron. With all my heart. A pragmatical, impertinent coxcomb! Come, master, we'll fill a pipe, and hear the lad's story within doors. I never yet was ashamed of my profession, and I'll take care my professsion shall have no reason to be ashamed of me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter BELFIELD *Junior and* SOPHIA.

Bel. jun. Madam, madam, will you not vouchsafe to give me a hearing?

Soph. Unless you could recall an act no earthly power can cancel, all attempt at explanation is vain.

Bel. jun. Yet, before we part for ever, obstinate, inexorable Sophia, tell me what is my offence?

Soph. Answer yourself that question, Mr Belfield; consult your own heart, consult your Violetta.

Bel. jun. Now, on my life, she's meanly jealous of Violetta: that grateful woman has been warm in her commendations of me, and her distempered fancy turns that candour into criminality. [*Aside.*

Soph. Ha! he seems confounded! Guilty beyond all doubt.

Bel. jun. By Heaven I'll no longer be the dupe to these bad humours: Lucy Waters, Violetta, every woman she sees or hears, alarms her jealousy, overthrows my hopes, and rouses every passion into fury. Well, madam, at length I see what you allude to; I shall follow your advice, and consult my Violetta; nay, more, consult my happiness; for with her, at least, I shall find repose; with you, I plainly see there can be none.

Soph. 'Tis very well, sir; the only favour you can now grant me is never to let me see you again; for, after what has passed between us, every time you intrude into my company, you will commit an insult upon good breeding and humanity.

Bel. jun. Madam, I'll take care to give you no further offence. [*Exit.*

Soph. Oh! my poor heart will break!

SCENE IV.

Enter Sir BENJAMIN DOVE.

Sir Ben. Hey-day, Sophia, what's the matter? What ails my child? Who has offended you? Did not I see the younger Belfield part from you just now?

Soph. O, sir! if you have any love for me, don't name that base treacherous wretch to me any more. [*Exit.*

Sir Ben. Upon my word, I am young Mr Belfield's most obsequious servant: a very notable confusion truly has he been pleased to make in my family. Lady Dove raves, Sophia cries; my wife calls him a saucy impudent fellow, my daughter says he's a base treacherous wretch; from all which I am to conclude, that he has spoke too plain truths to the one, and told too many lies to the other; one lady is irritated because he has refused favours; the other, perhaps, is afflicted because he has obtained 'em. Lady Dove has peremptorily insisted upon my giving him a challenge; but, to say the truth, I had no great stomach to the business till this fresh provocation; I perceive now I am growing into a most unaccountable rage; 'tis something so different from what I ever felt before, that, for what I know, it may be courage, and I mistake it for anger; I never did quarrel with any man, and hitherto no man ever quarrelled with me: egad, if once I break the ice, it sha'n't stop here: if young Belfield doesn't prove me a coward, Lady Dove shall see that I am a man of spirit.——Sure I see my gentleman coming hither again. [*Steps aside.*

Enter BELFIELD *Junior.*

Bel. jun. What meanness, what infatuation possesses me, that I should resolve to throw myself once more in her way! but she's gone, and yet I may escape with credit.

Sir Ben. Ay, there he is, sure enough: by the mass I don't like him: I'll listen a while, and discover what sort of a humour he is in.

Bel. jun. I am ashamed of this weakness: I am

determined to assume a proper spirit, and act as becomes a man upon this occasion.

Sir Ben. Upon my soul I'm very sorry for it.

Bel. jun. Now am I so distracted between love, rage, and disappointment, that I could find in my heart to sacrifice her, myself, and all mankind.

Sir Ben. Lord ha' mercy upon us, I'd better steal off and leave him to himself!

Bel. jun. And yet, perhaps, all this may proceed from an excess of fondness in my Sophia.

Sir Ben. Upon my word, you are blest with a most happy assurance.

Bel. jun. Something may have dropp'd from Violetta to alarm her jealousy; and, working upon the exquisite sensibility of her innocent mind, may have brought my sincerity into question.

Sir Ben. I don't understand a word of all this.

Bel. jun. Now could I fall at her feet for pardon, though I know not in what I have offended; I have not the heart to move. Fie upon it! What an arrant coward has love made me!

Sir Ben. A coward, does he say? I am heartily rejoiced to hear it: if I must needs come to action, pray Heaven it be with a coward! I'll even take him while he is in the humour, for fear he should recover his courage, and I lose mine. ——So, sir, your humble servant, Mr Belfield! I'm glad I have found you, sir.

Bel. jun. Sir Benjamin, your most obedient. Pray what are your commands, now you have found me?

Sir Ben. Hold! hold! don't come any nearer: don't you see I am in a most prodigious passion! Fire and fury! what's the reason you have made all this disorder in my house? my daughter in tears, my wife in fits; every thing in an uproar, and all your doing. Do you think I'll put up with this treatment? If you suppose you have a coward to deal with, you'll find yourself mistaken, greatly mistaken, let me tell you, sir! Mercy upon me, what a passion I am in! In short, Mr Belfield, the honour of my house is concerned, and I must and will have satisfaction.—I think this is pretty well to set in with: I'm horribly out of breath; I sweat at every pore. What great fatigues do men of courage undergo!

Bel. jun. Look'e, Sir Benjamin, I don't rightly comprehend what you would be at; but, if you think I have injured you, few words are best; disputes between men of honour are soon adjusted; I'm at your service, in any way you think fit.

Sir Ben. How you fly out now! Is that giving me the satisfaction I require? I am the person injured in this matter, and, as such, have a right to be in a passion; but I see neither right nor reason why you, who have done the wrong, should be as angry as I, who have received it.

Bel. jun. I suspect I have totally mistaken this honest gentleman; he only wants to build some reputation with his wife upon this rencounter, and 'twould be inhuman not to gratify him.

Sir Ben. What shall I do now? Egad I seem to have pos'd him: this plaguy sword sticks so hard in the scabbard——Well, come forth, rapier, 'tis but one thrust; and what should a man fear that has Lady Dove for his wife!

Bel. jun. Hey-day! Is the man mad? Put up your sword, Sir Benjamin; put it up, and don't expose yourself in this manner.

Sir Ben. You shall excuse me, sir; I have had some difficulty in drawing it, and am determined now to try what metal it's made of. So come on, sir.

Bel. jun. Really this is too ridiculous; I tell you, Sir Benjamin, I am in no humour for these follies. I've done no wrong to you or yours: on the contrary, great wrong has been done to me; but I have no quarrel with you, so, pray, put up your sword.

Sir Ben. And I tell you, Mr Belfield, 'tis in vain to excuse yourself.—The less readiness he shews, so much the more resolution I feel.

Bel. jun. Well, Sir Knight, if such is your humour, I won't spoil your longing. So have at you.

Enter Lady DOVE.

Lady Dove. Ah! [*Shrieks.*

Bel. jun. Hold, hold, Sir Benjamin, I never fight in ladies' company. Why, I protest you are a perfect Amadis de Gaul; a Don Quixote in heroism; and the presence of this your Dulcinea renders you invincible.

Sir Ben. O! my lady, is it you? don't be alarmed, my dear; 'tis all over: a small fracas between this gentleman and myself; that's all; don't be under any surprise; I believe the gentleman has had enough; I believe he is perfectly satisfied with my behaviour, and I persuade myself you will have no cause for the future to complain of his. Mr Belfield, this is Lady Dove.

Bel. jun. Madam, to a generous enemy 'tis mean to deny justice, or withhold applause. You are happy in the most valiant of defenders; gentle as you may find him in the tender passions, to a man, madam, he acquits himself like a man. Sir Benjamin Dove, in justice to your merit, I am ready to make any submission to this lady you shall please to impose——If you suffer her to bully you after this, you deserve to be henpeck'd all the days of your life.

Sir Ben. Say no more, my dear Bob; I shall love you for this the longest hour I have to live.

Bel. jun. If I have done you any service, promise me only one hour's conversation with your lovely daughter, and make what use of me you please.

Sir Ben. Here's my hand, you shall have it; leave us. [*Exit* BELFIELD *Junior.*

Lady Dove. What am I to think of all this? It cann't well be a contrivance; and yet 'tis strange, that yon little animal should have the assurance to face a man, and be so bashful at a rencounter with a woman.

Sir Ben. Well, Lady Dove, what are you musing upon? you see you are obey'd, the ho-

nour of your family is vindicated: slow to enter into these affairs; being once engaged, I pertinaciously conduct them to an issue.

Lady Dove. Sir Benjamin,——I——I——

Sir Ben. Here, Jonathan, do you hear? set my things ready in the library; make haste.

Lady Dove. I say, Sir Benjamin, I think——

Sir Ben. Well let's hear what it is you think.

Lady Dove. Bless us all, why you snap one up so—I say, I think, my dear, you have acquitted yourself tolerably well, and I am perfectly satisfied.

Sir Ben. Humph! you think I have done tolerably well? I think so too; do you apprehend me? Tolerably! for this business that you think tolerably well done, is but half concluded, let me tell you: nay, what some would call the toughest part of the undertaking remains unfinished; but, I dare say, with your concurrence, I shall find it easy enough.

Lady Dove. What is it you mean to do with my concurrence? what mighty project does your wise brain teem with?

Sir Ben. Nay, now I reflect on't again, I don't think there'll be any need of your concurrence; for, nolens or volens, I'm determined it shall be done. In short, this it is, I am unalterably resolved, from this time forward, Lady Dove, to be sole and absolute in this house, master of my own servants, father to my own child, and sovereign lord and governor, madam, over my own wife.

Lady Dove. You are?

Sir Ben. I am. Gods! Gods! What a pitiful, contemptible figure does a man make under petticoat government! Perish he that's mean enough to stoop to such indignities! I am determined to be free——

PATERSON *enters, and whispers Lady* DOVE.

Hah! how's this, Mr Paterson? What liberties are these you take with my wife, and before my face? No more of these freedoms, I beseech you, sir, as you expect to answer it to a husband, who will have no secrets whispered to his wife, to which he is not privy; nor any appointments made, in which he is not a party.

Pat. Hey-day! what a change of government is here! Egad, I'm very glad on't—I've no notion of a female administration. [*Exit.*

Lady Dove. What insolence is this, Sir Benjamin? what ribaldry do you shock my ears with? Let me pass, sir; I'll stay no longer in the same room with you.

Sir Ben. Not in the same room, nor under the same roof, shall you long abide, unless you reform your manners; however, for the present you must be content to stay where you are.

Lady Dove. What, sir, will you imprison me in my own house? I'm sick; I'm ill; I'm suffocated; I want air; I must and will walk into the garden.

Sir Ben. Then, madam, you must find some better weapon than your fan to parry my sword with: this pass I defend: what, dost think, after having encountered a man, I shall turn my back upon a woman! No, madam, I have ventured my life to defend your honour; 'twould be hard if I wanted spirit to protect my own.

Lady Dove. You, monster, would you draw your sword upon a woman?

Sir Ben. Unless it has been your pleasure to make me a monster, madam, I am none.

Lady Dove. Would you murder me, you inhuman brute? Would you murder your poor, fond, defenceless wife?

Sir Ben. Nor tears, nor threats, neither scolding, nor soothing, shall shake me from my purpose: your yoke, Lady Dove, has lain too heavy upon my shoulders; I can support it no longer: to-morrow, madam, you leave this house.

Lady Dove. Will you break my heart, you tyrant? Will you turn me out of doors to starve, you barbarous man?

Sir Ben. Oh! never fear; you will fare to the full as well as you did in your first husband's time; in your poor, dear, dead Mr Searcher's time. You told me once you prized the paltry greyhound that hung at his button-hole, more than all the jewels my folly had lavish'd upon you. I take you at your word; you shall have your bauble, and I will take back all mine; they'll be of no use to you hereafter.

Lady Dove. O! Sir Benjamin, Sir Benjamin, for mercy's sake, turn me not out of your doors! I will be obedient, gentle, and complying for the future; don't shame me; on my knees I beseech you don't.

Enter BELFIELD *Senior.*

Sir Ben. Mr Belfield, I am heartily glad to see you; don't go back, sir; you catch us indeed a little unawares; but these situations are not uncommon in well-ordered families; rewards and punishments are the life of government, and the authority of a husband must be upheld.

Bel. sen. I confess, Sir Benjamin, I was greatly surprised at finding Lady Dove in that attitude: but I never pry into family secrets; I had much rather suppose your lady was on her knees to intercede with you in my behalf, than be told she was reduced to that humble posture for any reason that affects herself.

Sir Ben. Sir, you are free to suppose what you please for Lady Dove; I'm willing to spare you that trouble on my account; and therefore I tell you plainly, if you will sign and seal your articles this night, to-morrow morning Sophia shall be yours: I'm resolved that the self-same day, which consecrates the redemption of my liberty, shall confirm the surrender of yours.

Lady Dove. O! Mr Belfield, I beseech you intercede with this dear, cruel man in my behalf; would you believe that he harbours a design of expelling me his house, on the very day too when he purposes celebrating the nuptials of his daughter?

Bel. sen. Come, Sir Benjamin, I must speak to you now as a friend in the nearest connection; I

beg you will not damp our happiness with so melancholy an event: I will venture to pledge myself for her ladyship.

Sir Ben. Well, for your sake, perhaps, I may prolong her departure for one day; but I'm determined, if she does stay to-morrow, she shall set the first dish upon the table; if 'tis only to shew the company what a refractory wife, in the hands of a man of spirit, may be brought to submit to. Our wives, Mr Belfield, may tease us, and vex us, and still escape with impunity; but, if once they thoroughly provoke us, the charm breaks, and they are lost for ever. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Sea Coast, as before. Enter* GOODWIN *and* FANNY.

Good. What you tell me, Fanny, gives me great concern, that Mr Francis should think to seduce the innocence of my child for a paltry bribe: what can have passed to encourage him to put such an affront upon you?

Fan. Till this proposal, which I tell you of, I always took Mr Francis for one of the best-behaved, modestest young men I had ever met with.

Good. To say the truth, Fanny, so did I; but the world is full of hypocrisy, and our acquaintance with him has been very short.——

Enter FRANCIS.

Hark'e, young man, a word with you! What is it I or my children have done to offend you?

Fran. Offend me! what is it you mean?

Good. When your vessel was stranded upon our coast, did we take advantage of your distress? On the contrary, wasn't this poor hut thrown open to your use, as a receptacle for your treasures, and a repose for your fatigues? Have either those treasures, or that repose, been invaded? Whom amongst you have we robbed or defrauded?

Fran. None, none; your honesty has been as conspicuous as your hospitality.

Good. Why then, having received no injury, do you seek to do one? an injury of the basest nature——You see there a poor girl, whose only portion in this world is her innocence, and of that you have sought to———

Fran. Hold; nor impute designs to me which I abhor: you say your daughter has no portion but her innocence; assured of that, I ask none else; and, if she can forgive the stratagem I have made use of, I am ready to atone for it by a life devoted to her service.

Good. Well, sir, I am happy to find you are the man I took you for, and cannot discommend your caution; so that, if you like my daughter, and Fanny is consenting——But, soft! who have we got here?

Fran. I wish Mr Paterson was further for interrupting us just now.

SCENE II.

Enter PATERSON.

Pat. Pray, good people, isn't there a lady with you of the name of Violetta?

Good. There is.

Pat. Can you direct me to her? I have business with her of the utmost consequence.

Good. Fanny, you and Mr Francis step in and let the lady know. [*Exeunt* FANNY *and* FRANCIS.

SCENE III.

GOODWIN *and* PATERSON.

Good. If it's no offence, Mr Paterson, allow me to ask you whether there is any hope of our young gentleman here, who is just returned, succeeding in his addresses to Miss Dove?

Pat. Certainly none, master Goodwin.

Good. I'm heartily sorry for it.

Pat. I find you are a stranger to the reasons which make against it: but how are you interested in his success?

Good. I am a witness of his virtues, and consequently not indifferent to his success. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

Enter VIOLETTA.

Pat. Madam, I presume your name is Violetta?

Vio. It is, sir.

Pat. I wait upon you, madam, at Miss Dove's desire, and as a particular friend of Mr Andrew Belfield's.

Vio. Sir!———

Pat. Madam!———

Vio. Pray proceed.

Pat. To entreat the favour of your company at Cropley-castle upon business, wherein that lady and gentleman are intimately concerned: I presume, madam, you guess what I mean.

Vio. Indeed, sir, I cannot easily guess how I can possibly be a party in any business between Miss Dove and Mr Belfield. I thought all intercourse between those persons was now entirely at an end.

Pat. Oh! no, madam, by no means; the affair is far from being at an end.

Vio. How, sir! not at an end?

Pat. No, madam: on the contrary, from Sir Benjamin's great anxiety for the match, and, above all, from the very seasonable intelligence you was so good to communicate to Miss Sophia, I am not without hopes that Mr Andrew Belfield will be happy enough to conquer all her scruples, and engage her to consent to marry him.

Vio. Indeed! but pray, sir, those scruples of Miss Dove's, which you flatter yourself Mr Bel-

field will so happily conquer, how is it that ladies in this country reconcile themselves to such matters? I should have thought such an obstacle utterly insurmountable.

Pat. Why, to be sure, madam, Miss Dove has had some doubts and difficulties to contend with: but duty, you know——and, as I said before, you, madam, you have been a great friend to Mr Belfield; you have forwarded matters surprisingly.

Vio. It is very surprising, truly, if I have.

Pat. You seem greatly staggered at what I tell you: I see you are no stranger to the principles upon which young ladies frequently act in this country: I believe, madam, in England, as many, or more, matches are made from pique, than for love; and, to say the truth, I take this of Miss Dove's to be one of that sort. There is a certain person you know, who will feel upon this occasion.

Vio. Yes; I well know there is a certain person who will feel upon this occasion; but, are the sufferings of that unhappy one to be converted into raillery and amusement?

Pat. Oh! madam! the ladies will tell you, that therein consists the very luxury of revenge. ——But, I beseech you, have the goodness to make haste; my friend Mr Belfield may stand in need of your support.

Vio. Thus insulted, I can contain myself no longer. Upon what infernal shore am I cast! into what society of demons am I fallen! that a woman, whom, by an act of honour, I would have redeemed from misery and ruin, should have the insolence, the inhumanity, to invite me to be a spectatress of her marriage with my own husband!

Pat. With your husband! What do I hear! Is Mr Andrew Belfield your husband?

Vio. Ay; do you doubt it? Would I could say he was not!

Pat. Just Heaven! you then are the Violetta, you are the Portuguese lady I have heard so much of, and married to Mr Belfield: base and perfidious!——Why, madam, both Miss Dove and myself conceived that 'twas the young adventurer with whom you suffered shipwreck, that——

Vio. What! Lewson, the brave, generous, honourable Lewson?

Pat. Lewson! Lewson! as sure as can be you mean young Belfield; for now the recollection strikes me, that I've heard he took that name before he quitted England. That Lewson, madam, whom we believed you married to, is Robert Belfield, and younger brother to your husband.

Vio. Mercy defend me! into what distress had this mutual mistake nearly involved us?

Pat. Come then, madam, let us lose no time, but fly with all dispatch to Cropley-castle; I have a post-chaise waiting, which will convey us thither in a few minutes: but, before we go, I'll step in, and direct these good people to find young Belfield, and send him after us—Old Ironsides and all must be there. [*Exit* PAT.

SCENE V.

Vio. Let me reflect upon my fate——Wedded, betrayed, abandoned! at once a widow and a wife! All that my soul held dear, in the same hour obtained and lost. O false, false Belfield! Strong indeed must be that passion, and deeply seated in my heart, which even thy treachery could not eradicate! Twice shipwrecked! twice rescued from the jaws of death; just Heaven! I do not, dare not murmur, nor can I doubt but that thy hand invisibly is stretched forth to save me, and, through this labyrinth of sorrow, to conduct me to repose.

Enter PATERSON.

Pat. Now, madam, if you will trust yourself to my convoy, I'll bring you into harbour, where you shall never suffer shipwreck more. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

Sir BENJAMIN DOVE'S *House.* *Enter Sir* BENJAMIN DOVE *and Lady* DOVE.

Sir Ben. Upon these terms and stipulations, Lady Dove, I consent to your remaining at Cropley-castle. Enjoy your own prerogative, and leave me in possession of mine; above all things, my dear, I must insist that Mr Paterson be henceforward considered as my friend and companion, and not your ladyship's.

Lady Dove. Nay, but indeed and indeed, my dear Sir Benjamin, that is being too hard with me, to debar me the common gratifications of every woman of distinction: Mr Paterson, you know, is my very particular friend.

Sir Ben. 'Tis for his being so very particular, my dear, that I object to him.

Lady Dove. Friendship, Sir Benjamin, is the virtuous recreation of delicate and susceptible minds; would you envy me that innocent pleasure? Why you know, my dearest, that your passion for me, which was once so violent, is now softened and subsided into mere friendship.

Sir Ben. True, my dear; and, therefore, I am afraid lest my love having, by easy degrees, slackened into friendship, his friendship should, by as natural a transition, quicken into love; say no more, therefore, upon this point, but leave me to Mr Paterson, and Mr Paterson to me—go—send Sophia to me—oh here she comes: your ladyship need not be present at our conference; I think my own daughter surely belongs to my province, and not your's. Good morning to you.

[*Exit Lady* DOVE.

SCENE VII.

Enter SOPHIA.

Sir Ben. Well, daughter, are you prepared to comply with my desires, and give your hand to Andrew Belfield this morning?

Soph. Sir!

Sir Ben. My heart is fixt upon this event; I have watched late and early to bring it to bear; and you'll find, my child, when you come to peruse your marriage settlement, how tenderly I have consulted your happiness in this match.

Soph. Alas! I should never think of search,

ing for happiness amongst deeds and conveyances; 'tis the man, and not the money, that is likely to determine my lot.

Sir Ben. Well, and is not Mr Belfield a man? a fine man, as I take it, he is; and a fine estate I'm sure he has got; then it lies so handy and contiguous to my own; only a hedge betwixt us; think of that, Sophy, only a hedge that parts his manor from mine; then consider, likewise, how this alliance will accommodate matters in the borough of Knavestown, where I and my family have stood three contested elections with his, and lost two of them; that sport will now be at an end, and our interest will be consolidated by this match, as well as our estates.

Soph. Still you mistake my meaning; I talk of the qualities of a man, you of his possessions; I require in a husband, good morals, good nature, and good sense; what has all this to do with contiguous estates, connected interests, and contested elections?

Sir Ben. I don't rightly understand what you would have, child; but this I well know, that if money alone will not make a woman happy, 'twill always purchase that that will.——I hope, Sophy, you've done thinking of that rambling, idle young fellow, Bob Belfield.

Soph. Perish all thought of him for ever! Nothing can be more contrary, more impossible in nature, than my union with young Belfield:—age, ugliness, ill-nature, bring any thing to my arms, rather than him!

Sir Ben. But why so angry with him, child? This violent detestation and abhorrence is as favourable a symptom as any reasonable lover could wish for.

SCENE VIII.

Enter PATERSON.

Pat. Joy to you, Sir Benjamin! all joy attend you both! the bridegroom by this time has arrived; we saw his equipage enter the avenue as ours drove into the court.

Sir Ben. Mr Paterson, sir, I know not if yet your friend is to be a bridegroom; I find my daughter here so cold and uncomplying, for my own part, I don't know how I shall look Mr Belfield in the face.

Pat. Fear nothing, Sir Benjamin: make haste and receive your son-in-law; I have news to communicate to Miss Dove, which, I am confident, will dispose her to comply with your wishes.

Sir Ben. Well, sir, I shall leave her to your tutorage. This obliging gentleman undertakes not only for my wife, but my daughter too.

[*Exit.*

Soph. I am surprised, Mr Paterson——

Pat. Hold, madam, for one moment; I have made a discovery of the last importance to your welfare: you are in an error with regard to young Belfield——Violetta, the lady you believed him to be married to, is here in the house; I have brought her hither at your request, and from her I learn that the elder brother is her husband; he who this very morning, but for my discovery, had been yours also.

Soph. What's this you tell me, sir?——Where is this lady? where is Violetta? where is young Belfield?

Pat. Violetta, madam, I have put under safe convoy, and by this time your waiting woman has lodged her privately in the closet of your bedchamber: there you will find her, and learn the whole process of this providential escape.—— I'll only speak a word to Sir Benjamin, and come to you without any further delay. [*Exit* SOPHIA.

SCENE IX.

Enter Sir BENJAMIN DOVE *and* BELFIELD *Senior.*

Sir Ben. Well, Mr Paterson, what says my daughter?

Pat. Every thing that becomes an obedient daughter to say; so that if this gentleman is not made completely happy within this hour, the fault will lie at his door, and not with Miss Sophia.

Sir Ben. This is good news, Paterson; but I am impatient to have the ceremony concluded: the bells are ringing, the parson is waiting, and the equipages are at the door; step up to Sophia, and tell her to hasten; and, heark'e, my friend, as you go by Lady Dove's door, give her a call, do you mind me, only a call at the door: don't you go in; she's busy at work upon a large parcel of ribbands, which I have given her to make into wedding favours; she'll be very angry if you go into her chamber. Go, go, get you gone.

[*Exit* PATERSON.

Bel. sen. How comes it to pass, Sir Benjamin, that Mr Paterson becomes so necessary an agent in the female affairs of your family? I confess to you, my pride is wounded, when I find I am to thank him for your daughter's consent to marry me. The man that can prevail upon a woman to act against her liking, what may he not persuade her to do with it?

Sir Ben. Your remark is just; Paterson has certainly some secret faculty of persuasion; and all that can be said is, that 'tis better to see your danger before marriage, than to be feeling it out, as I have done, afterwards.

SCENE X.

Enter Captain IRONSIDES *and* BELFIELD *Junior.*

Sir Ben. What, old acquaintance, are you come to rejoice with me on this occasion?—— Bob Belfield too, as I live; you are both heartily welcome——I could have spared their visit notwithstanding. [*Aside.*

Bel. sen. My brother here? vexation!

Bel. jun. Sir Benjamin, I come now to claim your promise of one hour's conversation with your daughter.

Sir Ben. The devil you do!

Bel sen. Ridiculous!

Bel. jun. To you, sir, obligations of this sort may be matter of ridicule; but, while I religiously observe all promises I make to others, I shall expect others to be as observant of those they make to me.

Bel. sen. Sir, I have a most profound veneration for your principles, and am happy to find your understanding so much cultivated by travel; but, in spite of your address, you will find it rather difficult to induce me to wave my right in Miss Dove in favour of a professed adventurer.

Bel. jun. Shameless, unfeeling man! an adventurer do you call me? You whose unbrotherly persecution drove me to this hazardous, this humiliating occupation!

Iron. Sirrah! Bob! no reflections upon privateering; it has lined your pockets well, you young rogue; and you may tell your fine brother there, that we have landed treasure enough upon his estate to buy the fee-simple of it; ay, and, for what I know, of Sir Wiseacre's here, into the bargain.

Sir Ben. What's that you say, Captain Ironsides? Let's have a word in a corner with you.

Bel. sen. Look'e, sir, if you conceive yourself wronged by me, there is but one way——You know your remedy.

Bel. jun. I know your meaning, brother; and, to demonstrate how much greater my courage is than yours, I must confess to you, I dare not accept your proposal.

Sir Ben. No, no, I've given him enough of that, I believe.

Iron. Bob Belfield, if I did not know thee for a lad of mettle, I shou'dn't tell what to make of all this:—for my own part, I understand none of your scruples and refinements, not I; a man is a man; and if I take care to give an affront to no man, I think I have a right to take an affront from no man.

Sir Ben. Come, gentlemen, suspend your dispute; here comes my daughter, let her decide betwixt you.

Bel. jun. Let me receive my sentence from her lips, and I will submit to it.

Enter SOPHIA, PATERSON, *and Lady* DOVE.

Sir Ben. Here's a young gentleman, daughter, that will take no denial; he comes to forbid the banns just when you are both going into the church to be married.

Soph. Upon my word, this is something extraordinary. What are the gentleman's reasons for this behaviour?

Sir Ben. He claims a sort of promise from me that he should be indulged in an hour's conversation with you before you give your hand to his brother.

Soph. An hour's conversation! What little that gentleman can have to say to me, I believe, may be said in a very few minutes.

Bel. sen. I think, brother, this conversation don't promise a great deal.

Soph. In the first place, then, I own to this gentleman and the company present, that there was a time when I entertained the highest opinion of his merit. Nay, I will not scruple to confess that I had conceived a regard for him of the tenderest sort.

Iron. And pray, young lady, how came my nephew to forfeit your good opinion?

Soph. By a conduct, sir, that must for ever forfeit not my esteem only, but yours and all mankind's: I am sorry to be his accuser, but I will appeal to you, Mr Belfield, who are his brother, whether it is reconcileable either to honour or humanity to prosecute an affair of marriage with one woman, when you are previously and indispensably engaged to another?

Bel. sen. Humph!

Soph. Yet this, sir, is the treatment I have received: judge, therefore, if I can desire or consent to have any long conversation with a gentleman who is under such engagements; nay, whom I can prove actually married to another woman in this very house, and ready to vouch the truth of what I assert. Judge for me, Mr Belfield, could you believe any man capable of such complicated, such inconceivable villainy?

Bel. sen. Heavens! This touches me too closely.

Sir Ben. Sir, I would fain know what excuse you can have for this behaviour? I can tell you, sir, I don't understand it.

Lady Dove. Oh! fie! fie upon you, Mr Belfield! I wonder you are not ashamed to show your face in this family.

Sir Ben. Who desired you to put in your oar?

Iron. Why, sirrah, would not one wife content you? 'Tis enough in all reason for one man; is it not, Sir Benjamin?

Bel. jun. Sir, when it is proved I am married, accuse me.

Iron. Look'e, Bob, I don't accuse you for marrying; 'twas an indiscretion, and I can forgive it; but to deny it is a meanness, and I abhor it.

Soph. Mr Belfield, do you say nothing upon this occasion?

Bel. sen. Paterson, I am struck to the heart; I cannot support my guilt: I am married to Violetta; save me the confusion of relating it: this dishonourable engagement for ever I renounce; nor will I rest till I have made atonement to an injured wife.—Madam, I beg leave to withdraw for a few minutes.

Bel. jun. Hold, sir! this contrivance is of your forging; you have touched me too near; and now, if you dare draw your sword, follow me.

Soph. Hold, gentlemen, you forget the lady is now in the house; she is a witness that will effectually put an end to your dispute; I will conduct her hither. [*Exit.*

Bel. jun. I agree to it.

Iron. Hark'e, nephew, I shrewdly suspect you have been laying a train to blow yourself up: if once Bob comes fairly alongside of you, you'll

find your quarters too hot to hold you: I never yet found my boy out in a lie, and sha'n't tamely see a lie imposed upon him; for, while he is honest, and I have breath, he shall never want a friend to stand by him, or a father to protect him.

Bel. sen. Mr Paterson, explain my story; I will depart this instant in search of Violetta.

Enter SOPHIA *and* VIOLETTA.

Soph. Stay! I conjure you stay, turn, and look back upon this lady before you go.

[*Presenting* VIO.

Bel. sen. My wife!

Sir Ben. Hey-day! here's a turn.

Iron. I thought how 'twould be.

Vio. Yes, sir, your faithful, your forsaken wife.

Bel. sen. How shall I look upon you? What shall I say? Where shall I hide my confusion? Oh! take me to your arms, and in that soft shelter let me find forgiveness and protection.

Vio. Be this your only punishment! and this!

Bel. jun. Was it then a sister I preserved from death?

Bel. sen. What's this I hear? Oh! brother, can you pardon too?

Bel. jun. Be indeed a brother, and let this providential event be the renovation of our friendship.

Bel. sen. What shall I say to you, madam? [*To* SOPHIA.] Paterson, you know my heart: bear witness to its remorse. By Heaven, my secret resolution was instantly to have departed in search of this my injured wife; but I'm not worthy even of your resentment: here is one that merits and returns your love.

[*Turning to his Brother.*

Iron. Come, god-daughter, we can never say the fleet's fairly come to anchor, while the admiral's ship is out at sea. [*Presenting* BELFIELD *Junior.*] My nephew here is as honest a lad as lives, and loves you at the soul of him: give him your hand, and I'll broach the last chest of dollars to make him a fortune deserving you. What say you, my old friend?

Sir Ben. Here's my hand! I've spoke the word; she's his own. Lady Dove, I won't hear a syllable to the contrary.

Iron. Then the galleon is thy own, boy.—— What should an old fellow like me do with money? Give me a warm night-cap, a tiff of punch, and an elbow chair in your chimney corner, and I'll lay up for the rest of my days.

Bel. jun. How shall I give utterance to my gratitude or my love?

Enter GOODWIN, FANNY, FRANCIS, PHILIP, *and* LUCY.

Sir Ben. So, so! more work for the parson.

Iron. What! Francis, hast thou chosen a mate, and art bound upon a matrimonial cruise as well as thy master?

Fran. Ay, sir; so he is happy as well as myself, and has no objection to my choice.

Bel. sen. What! are you all assembled to overwhelm me with confusion? Like some poor culprit, surrounded by a crowd of witnesses, I stand convicted and appall'd. But all your wrongs shall be redressed; your's, Goodwin; Philip's; Lucy's: my whole life shall be employed in acts of justice and atonement. Virtue, and this virtuous woman, were my first ruling passions.

Now they resume their social soft controul,
And love and happiness possess my soul.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MRS YATES.

WHO but has seen the celebrated strife,
Where Reynolds calls the canvass into life;
And, 'wixt the tragic and the comic muse,
Courted of both, and dubious where to choose,
Th' immortal actor stands?——Here we espy
An awful figure, pointing to the sky;
A grave, sublime, commanding form she bears,
And in her zone an unsheathed dagger wears.
On t'other side, with sweet attractive mien,
The playful muse of comedy is seen;
She, with a thousand soft bewitching smiles,
Mistress of love, his yielding heart beguiles;
(For where's the heart so hardened, to withstand
The fond compulsion of so fair a hand?)
Oh! would she here bestow those winning arts!
This night we'd fix her empire in your hearts;

No tragic passions should deface the age,
But all should catch good-humour from the stage:
The storming husband, and imperious wife,
Should learn the doctrine of a quiet life:
The plodding drudge should here at times resort,
And leave his stupid club, and stummy port;
The pensive politician, who foresees
Clouds, storms, and tempests, in the calms of peace;
The scribbling tribe, who vent their angry spleens
In songs, prints, pamphlets, papers, magazines;
Lucius, and Anti-Lucius, pro's and con's,
The list of placets, and of placet-nons;
The mobbing vulgar, and the ruling great,
And all who storm, and all who steer the state;
Here should forget the labours of the day,
And laugh their cares and their complaints away.
The wretch of Jonathan's, who, crushed with shame,
Crawls lamely out from India's desperate game,
Safely might speculate within these walls;
For here, while you approve, stock never falls:
Pleased then indulge the efforts of to-night,
Nor grudge to give, if you've received delight.

THE

WEST INDIAN.

BY

CUMBERLAND.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

STOCKWELL, *a Merchant, Father to Belcour.*
BELCOUR, *the West Indian, attached to Louisa.*
Captain DUDLEY, *an old Officer on Half-pay.*
CHARLES DUDLEY, *his Son, attached to Charlotte Rusport.*
Major O'FLAHERTY, *an Irishman.*
STUKELY, *principal Clerk to Stockwell.*
FULMER.
VARLAND, *a Lawyer.*
Sailor.
Servant to Stockwell.
Servant to Lady Rusport.

WOMEN.

Lady RUSPORT, *attached to Major O'Flaherty.*
CHARLOTTE, *her Daughter.*
LOUISA, *Daughter to Dudley.*
Mrs FULMER, *Wife to Fulmer.*
LUCY, *Maid to Charlotte Rusport.*
Housekeeper belonging to Stockwell.

Clerks belonging to Stockwell, Servants, Sailors, Negroes, &c.

SCENE,—*London.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Merchant's Counting-house.*

In an inner Room, set off by Glass-doors, are discovered several Clerks, employed at their desks. A writing-table in the front room. STOCKWELL *is discovered reading a letter ;* STUKELY *comes gently out of the back room, and observes him some time before he speaks.*

Stuke. He seems disordered : something in that etter, and I'm afraid of an unpleasant sort. He ıas many ventures of great account at sea ; a ship ichly freighted for Barcelona ; another for Lisbon ; and others expected from Cadiz, of still greater value. Besides these, I know he has many deep concerns in foreign bottoms, and underwritings to a vast amount. I'll accost him.—— Sir ! Mr Stockwell !

Stock. Stukely !——Well, have you shipped the cloths ?

Stuke. I have, sir ; here's the bill of lading, and copy of the invoice : the assortments are all compared : Mr Traffick will give you the policy upon 'Change.

Stock. 'Tis very well ; lay these papers by ; and no more of business for a while. Shut the door, Stukely. I have had long proof of your friendship and fidelity to me ; a matter of most infinite concern lies on my mind, and 'twill be a sensible relief to unbosom myself to you. I have just now been informed of the arrival of the young West

Indian, I have so long been expecting; you know whom I mean?

Stuke. Yes, sir; Mr Belcour, the young gentleman who inherited old Belcour's great estates in Jamaica.

Stock. Hush, not so loud; come a little nearer this way. This Belcour is now in London; part of his baggage is already arrived; and I expect him every minute. Is it to be wondered at, if his coming throws me into some agitation, when I tell you, Stukely, he is my son!

Stuke. Your son!

Stock. Yes, sir, my only son. Early in life I accompanied his grandfather to Jamaica, as his clerk; he had an only daughter, somewhat older than myself, the mother of this gentleman: it was my chance (call it good or ill) to engage her affections; and, as the inferiority of my condition made it hopeless to expect her father's consent, her fondness provided an expedient, and we were privately married: the issue of that concealed engagement is, as I have told you, this Belcour.

Stuke. That event, surely, discovered your connexion?

Stock. You shall hear. Not many days after our marriage, old Belcour set out for England; and, during his abode here, my wife was, with great secrecy, delivered of this son. Fruitful in expedients to disguise her situation, without parting from her infant, she contrived to have it laid and received at her door as a foundling. After some time, her father returned, having left me here; in one of those favourable moments, that decide the fortunes of prosperous men, this child was introduced: from that instant, he treated him as his own, gave him his name, and brought him up in his family.

Stuke. And did you never reveal this secret, either to old Belcour, or your son?

Stock. Never.

Stuke. Therein you surprise me; a merchant of your eminence, and a member of the British parliament, might surely aspire, without offence, to the daughter of a planter. In this case too, natural affection would prompt to a discovery.

Stock. Your remark is obvious; nor could I have persisted in this painful silence, but in obedience to the dying injunctions of a beloved wife. The letter, you found me reading, conveyed those injunctions to me; it was dictated in her last illness, and almost in the article of death (you'll spare me the recital of it;) she there conjures me, in terms as solemn as they are affecting, never to reveal the secret of our marriage, or withdraw my son, while her father survived.

Stuke. But on what motives did your unhappy lady found these injunctions?

Stock. Principally, I believe, from apprehension on my account, lest old Belcour, on whom, at her decease, I wholly depended, should withdraw his protection: in part, from consideration of his repose, as well knowing the discovery would deeply affect his spirit, which was haughty, vehement, and unforgiving; and lastly, in regard to the interest of her infant, whom he had warmly adopted, and for whom, in case of a discovery, every thing was to be dreaded from his resentment. And, indeed, though the alteration in my condition might have justified me in discovering myself, yet I always thought my son safer in trusting to the caprice, than to the justice, of his grandfather. My judgment has not suffered by the event; old Belcour is dead, and has bequeathed his whole estate to him we are speaking of.

Stuke. Now, then, you are no longer bound to secrecy.

Stock. True: but, before I publicly reveal myself, I could wish to make some experiment of my son's disposition. This can only be done by letting his spirit take its course without restraint; by these means, I think I shall discover much more of his real character, under the title of his merchant, than I should under that of his father.

A Sailor enters, ushering in several black servants, carrying portmanteaus, trunks, &c.

Sai. Save your honour—is your name Stockwell, pray?

Stock. It is.

Sai. Part of my master Belcour's baggage, an't please you: there's another cargo not far a-stern of us, and the cockswain has got charge of the dumb creatures.

Stock. Prithee, friend, what dumb creatures do you speak of? Has Mr Belcour brought over a collection of wild beasts?

Sai. No, Lord love him! no, not he: let me see; there's two green monkies, a pair of grey parrots, a Jamaica sow and pigs, and a Mangrove dog; that's all.

Stock. Is that all?

Sai. Yes, your honour; yes, that's all; bless his heart, a'might have brought over the whole island if he would; a didn't leave a dry eye in it.

Stock. Indeed! Stukely, shew them where to bestow their baggage. Follow that gentleman.

Sai. Come, bear a hand, my lads; bear a hand.

[*Exit with* STUKELY *and Servants.*

Stock. If the principal tallies with his purveyors, he must be a singular spectacle in this place: he has a friend, however, in this sea-faring fellow: 'tis no bad prognostic of a man's heart, when his shipmates give him a good word. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to a Drawing-room.*

A Servant discovered setting the Chairs by, &c. A Woman Servant enters to him.

House. Why, what a fuss does our good master put himself in about this West Indian! See what a bill of fare I've been forced to draw out: seven and nine, I'll assure you, and only a family dinner, as he calls it: why, if my lord mayor was expected, there couldn't be a greater to do about him.

Ser. I wish to my heart you had but seen the loads of trunks, boxes, and portmanteaus he has sent hither. An ambassador's baggage, with all the smuggled goods of his family, does not exceed it.

nephew! Sir Oliver renounced him as his grandson. Wasn't he son of the eldest daughter, and only male descendant of Sir Oliver? and didn't he cut him off with a shilling? Didn't the poor, dear, good man leave his whole fortune to me, except a small annuity to my maiden sister, who spoiled her constitution with nursing him? And, depend upon it, not a penny of that fortune shall ever be disposed of otherwise, than according to the will of the donor.

Enter CHARLES DUDLEY.

So, young man, whence come you? What brings you to town?

Charles. If there is any offence in my coming to town, your ladyship is in some degree responsible for it; for part of my errand was to pay my duty here.

Lady Rus. I hope you have some better excuse than all this.

Charles. 'Tis true, madam, I have other motives: but, if I consider my trouble repaid by the pleasure I now enjoy, I should hope my aunt would not think my company the less welcome for the value I set upon hers.

Lady Rus. Coxcomb! And where is your father, child, and your sister? Are they in town too?

Charles. They are.

Lady Rus. Ridiculous! I don't know what people do in London, who have no money to spend in it.

Char. Dear madam, speak more kindly to your nephew; how can you oppress a youth of his sensibility?

Lady Rus. Miss Rusport, I insist upon your retiring to your apartment: when I want your advice, I'll send to you. [*Exit* CHARLOTTE.] So, you have put on a red coat, too, as well as your father: 'tis plain what value you set upon the good advice Sir Oliver used to give you: how often has he cautioned you against the army?

Charles. Had it pleased my grandfather to enable me to have obey'd his caution, I would have done it; but you well know how destitute I am; and 'tis not to be wondered at, if I prefer the service of my king to that of any other master.

Lady Rus. Well, well; take your own course; 'tis no concern of mine: you never consulted me.

Charles. I frequently wrote to your ladyship, but could obtain no answer; and, since my grandfather's death, this is the first opportunity I have had of waiting upon you.

Lady Rus. I must desire you not to mention the death of that dear good man in my hearing; my spirits cannot support it.

Charles. I shall obey you: permit me to say, that, as that event has richly supplied you with the materials of bounty, the distresses of my family can furnish you with objects of it.

Lady Rus. The distresses of your family, child, are quite out of the question at present: had Sir Oliver been pleased to consider them, I should have been well content; but he has absolutely taken no notice of you in his will, and that to me must and shall be a law. Tell your father and your sister I totally disapprove of their coming up to town.

Charles. Must I tell my father that, before your ladyship knows the motive that brought him hither?——Allured by the offer of exchanging for a commission on full pay, the veteran, after thirty years service, prepares to encounter the fatal heats of Senegambia; but wants a small supply to equip him for the expedition.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Major O'Flaherty, to wait on your ladyship.

Enter Major O'FLAHERTY.

O'Fla. Spare your speeches, young man; don't you think her ladyship can take my word for that? I hope, madam, 'tis evidence enough of my being present, when I've the honour of telling you so myself.

Lady Rus. Major O'Flaherty, I am rejoiced to see you. Nephew Dudley, you perceive I'm engaged.

Charles. I shall not intrude upon your ladyship's more agreeable engagements. I presume I have my answer?

Lady Rus. Your answer, child! what answer can you possibly expect? or how can your romantic father suppose that I am to abet him in all his idle and extravagant undertakings? Come, major, let me shew you the way into my dressing-room, and let us leave this young adventurer to his meditation. [*Exit.*

O'Fla. I follow you, my lady. Young gentleman, your obedient! Upon my conscience, as fine a young fellow as I could wish to clap my eyes on: he might have answered my salute, however—well, let it pass: Fortune, perhaps, frowns upon the poor lad: she's a damned slippery lady, and very apt to jilt us poor fellows, that wear cockades in our hats. Fare thee well, honey, whoever thou art. [*Exit.*

Charles. So much for the virtues of a puritan! Out upon it! her heart is flint; yet that woman, that aunt of mine, without one worthy particle in her composition, would, I dare be sworn, as soon set her foot in a pest-house as in a play-house. [*Going.*

Miss RUSPORT *enters to him.*

Char. Stop, stay a little, Charles; whither are you going in such haste!

Charles. Madam! Miss Rusport! what are your commands?

Char. Why so reserved? We had used to answer to no other names than those of Charles and Charlotte.

Charles. What ails you? You have been weeping.

Char. No, no; or, if I have——your eyes are full too. But I have a thousand things to say to you. Before you go, tell me, I conjure you,

where you are to be found; here, write me your direction; write it upon the back of this visiting-ticket——Have you a pencil?

Charles. I have: but why should you desire to find us out? 'tis a poor, little, inconvenient place; my sister has no apartment fit to receive you in.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Madam, my lady desires your company directly.

Char. I am coming—Well, have you wrote it? Give it me. O Charles! either you do not, or you will not, understand me. [*Exeunt severally.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* FULMER'S *House.*

Enter FULMER *and Mrs* FULMER.

Mrs Ful. Why, how you sit musing and moping, sighing and desponding! I'm ashamed of you, Mr Fulmer: is this the country you described to me, a second Eldorado, rivers of gold and rocks of diamonds? You found me in a pretty snug retired way of life at Boulogne, out of the noise and bustle of the world, and wholly at my ease; you, indeed, was upon the wing, with a fiery persecution at your back: but, like a true son of Loyola, you had then a thousand ingenious devices to repair your fortune: and this, your native country, was to be the scene of your performances: fool that I was, to be inveigled into it by you! but, thank Heaven, our partnership is revocable. I am not your wedded wife, praised be my stars! for what have we got, whom have we gulled, but ourselves? which of all your trains has taken fire? even this poor expedient of your bookseller's shop seems abandoned; for, if a chance customer drops in, who is there, pray, to help him to what he wants?

Ful. Patty, you know it is not upon slight grounds that I despair; there had used to be a livelihood to be picked up in this country, both for the honest and dishonest: I have tried each walk, and am likely to starve at last: there is not a point to which the wit and faculty of man can turn, that I have not set mine to; but in vain, I am beat through every quarter of the compass.

Mrs Ful. Ah! common efforts all: strike me a master-stroke, Mr Fulmer, if you wish to make any figure in this country.

Ful. But where, how, and what? I have blustered for prerogative; I have bellowed for freedom; I have offered to serve my country; I have engaged to betray it. A master-stroke, truly! why, I have talked treason, writ treason; and, if a man cann't live by that, he can live by nothing. Here I set up as a bookseller, why men left off reading; and, if I was to turn butcher, I believe, on my conscience, they'd leave off eating.

Captain DUDLEY *crosses the stage.*

Mrs Ful. Why, there now's your lodger, old Captain Dudley, as he calls himself; there's no flint without fire; something might be struck out of him, if you had the wit to find the way.

Ful. Hang him, an old dry-skinned curmudgeon! you may as well think to get truth out of a courtier, or candour out of a critic: I can make nothing of him; besides, he's poor, and therefore not for our purpose.

Mrs Ful. The more fool he! Would any man be poor that had such a prodigy in his possession?

Ful. His daughter, you mean? She is, indeed, uncommonly beautiful.

Mrs Ful. Beautiful! Why, she need only be seen, to have the first men in the kingdom at her feet. Egad, I wish I had the leasing of her beauty; what would some of our young nabobs give——

Ful. Hush! here comes the captain; good girl, leave us to ourselves, and let me try what I can make of him.

Mrs Ful. Captain, truly! i'faith, I'd have a regiment, had I such a daughter, before I was three months older. [*Exit Mrs* FUL.

Enter Captain DUDLEY.

Ful. Captain Dudley, good morning to you!

Dud. Mr Fulmer, I have borrowed a book from your shop; 'tis the sixth volume of my deceased friend Tristram: he is a flattering writer to us poor soldiers; and the divine story of Le Fevre, which makes part of this book, in my opinion of it, does honour, not to its author only, but to human nature.

Ful. He's an author I keep in the way of trade, but one I never relished: he is much too loose and profligate for my taste.

Dud. That's being too severe: I hold him to be a moralist in the noblest sense: he plays, indeed, with the fancy, and sometimes, perhaps, too wantonly; but, while he thus designedly masks his main attack, he comes at once upon the heart; refines, amends it, softens it; beats down each selfish barrier from about it; and opens every sluice of pity and benevolence.

Ful. We of the catholic persuasion are not much bound to him.——Well, sir, I shall not oppose your opinion; a favourite author is like a favourite mistress; and there, you know, captain, no man likes to have his taste arraigned.

Dud. Upon my word, sir, I don't know what a man likes in that case; 'tis an experiment I never made.

Ful. Sir!—Are you serious?

Dud. 'Tis of little consequence whether you think so.

Ful. What a formal old prig it is! [*Aside.*] I apprehend you, sir; you speak with caution; you are married?

Dud. I have been.

Ful. And this young lady, which accompanies you—

Dud. Passes for my daughter.

Ful. Passes for his daughter! humph—[*Aside.*] She is exceedingly beautiful, finely accomplished, of a most enchanting shape and air.

Dud. You are much too partial: she has the greatest defect a woman can have.

Ful. How so, pray?

Dud. She has no fortune.

Ful. Rather say that you have none; and that's a sore defect in one of your years, Captain Dudley: you've served, no doubt?

Dud. Familiar coxcomb! But I'll humour him. [*Aside.*

Ful. A close old fox! But I'll unkennel him. [*Aside.*]

Dud. Above thirty years I've been in the service, Mr Fulmer.

Ful. I guessed as much; I laid it at no less: why, 'tis a wearisome time; 'tis an apprenticeship to a profession, fit only for a patriarch. But preferment must be closely followed: you never could have been so far behind-hand in the chase, unless you had palpably mistaken your way. You'll pardon me; but I begin to perceive you have lived in the world, not with it.

Dud. It may be so; and you, perhaps, can give me better council. I'm now soliciting a favour; an exchange to a company on full pay; nothing more; and yet I meet a thousand bars to that; though, without boasting, I should think the certificate of services, which I sent in, might have purchased that indulgence to me.

Ful. Who thinks or cares about them? Certificate of services, indeed! Send in a certificate of your fair daughter; carry her in your hand with you.

Dud. What? Who? My daughter! Carry my daughter! Well, and what then?

Ful. Why, then your fortune's made, that's all.

Dud. I understand you: and this you call knowledge of the world? Despicable knowledge! but, sirrah, I will have you know——— [*Threatening him.*

Ful. Help! Who's within? Would you strike me, sir? Would you lift your hand against a man in his own house?

Dud. In a church, if he dare insult the poverty of a man of honour.

Ful. Have a care what you do! remember there is such a thing in law as an assault and battery; ay, and such trifling forms as warrants and indictments.

Dud. Go, sir: you are too mean for my resentment: 'tis that, and not the law, protects you.——Hence!

Ful. An old, absurd, incorrigible blockhead! I'll be revenged of him. [*Aside.*

[*Exit* FUL.

Enter CHARLES DUDLEY.

Cha. What is the matter, sir? Sure I heard an outcry as I entered the house?

Dud. Not unlikely; our landlord and his wife are for ever wrangling.—Did you find your aunt Dudley at home?

Cha. I did.

Dud. And what was your reception?

Cha. Cold as our poverty and her pride could make it.

Dud. You told her the pressing occasion I had for a small supply to equip me for this exchange; has she granted me the relief I asked?

Cha. Alas, sir, she has peremptorily refused it.

Dud. That's hard; that's hard, indeed! My petition was for a small sum; she has refused it, you say? well, be it so; I must not complain. Did you see the broker about the insurance on my life?

Cha. There, again, I am the messenger of ill news: I can raise no money, so fatal is the climate: alas, that ever my father should be sent to perish in such a place!

LOUISA *enters hastily.*

Dud. Louisa, what's the matter? you seem frightened!

Lou. I am, indeed: coming from Miss Rusport's, I met a young gentleman in the streets, who has beset me in the strangest manner.

Cha. Insufferable! Was he rude to you?

Lou. I cannot say he was absolutely rude to me, but he was very importunate to speak to me, and once or twice attempted to lift up my hat: he followed me to the corner of the street, and there I gave him the slip.

Dud. You must walk no more in the streets, child, without me or your brother.

Lou. O, Charles! Miss Rusport desires to see you directly; Lady Rusport is gone out, and she has something particular to say to you.

Cha. Have you any commands for me, sir?

Dud. None, my dear: by all means wait upon Miss Rusport. Come, Louisa, I shall desire you to go up to your chamber and compose yourself. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter BELCOUR, *after peeping in at the door.*

Bel. Not a soul, as I'm alive! Why, what an odd sort of a house is this! Confound the little jilt, she has fairly given me the slip. A plague upon this London, I shall have no luck in it: such a crowd, and such a hurry, and such a number of shops, and one so like the other, that whether the wench turned into this house or the next, or whether she went up stairs or down stairs (for there's a world above and a world below, it seems), I declare, I know no more than if I was in the Blue Mountains. In the name of all the devils at once, why did she run away? If every handsome girl I meet in this town is to lead me such a wild-goose chase, I had better have staid

in the torrid zone. I shall be wasted to the size of a sugar-cane. What shall I do? give the chase up! Hang it, that's cowardly. Shall I, a true-born son of Phœbus, suffer this little nimble-footed Daphne to escape me?———Forbid it, honour, and forbid it, love.———Hush, hush——here she comes.——Oh, the devil!——— What tawdry thing have we got here?——

Enter Mrs FULMER.

Mrs Ful. Your humble servant, sir.

Bel. Your humble servant, madam.

Mrs Ful. A fine summer day, sir.

Bel. Yes, madam, and so cool, that, if the kalendar did not call it July, I should swear it was January.

Mrs Ful. Sir!

Bel. Madam!

Mrs Ful. Do you wish to speak to Mr Fulmer, sir?

Bel. Mr Fulmer, madam? I have not the honour of knowing such a person.

Mrs Ful. No, I'll be sworn, have you not; thou art much too pretty a fellow, and too much of a gentleman, to be an author thyself, or to have any thing to say to those that are so. 'Tis the captain, I suppose, you are waiting for?

Bel. I rather suspect it is the captain's wife.

Mrs Ful. The captain has no wife, sir.

Bel. No wife! I am heartily sorry for it; for then, she's his mistress; and that I take to be the more desperate case of the two. Pray, madam, was not there a lady just now turned into your house? 'Twas with her I wished to speak.

Mrs Ful. What sort of a lady, pray?

Bel. One of the loveliest sort my eyes ever beheld; young, tall, fresh, fair; in short, a goddess.

Mrs Ful. Nay, but, dear, dear sir, now I'm sure you flatter: for 'twas me you followed into the shop-door this minute.

Bel. You! No, no, take my word for it, it was not you, madam.

Mrs Ful. But what is it you laugh at?

Bel. Upon my soul, I ask your pardon; but it was not you, believe me: be assured it was not.

Mrs Ful. Well, sir, I shall not contend for the honour of being noticed by you; I hope you think you would not have been the first man that noticed me in the streets. However, this I'm positive of, that no living woman but myself has entered these doors this morning.

Bel. Why, then, I'm mistaken in the house, that's all; for 'tis not humanly possible I can be so far out in the lady. [*Going.*

Mrs Ful. Coxcomb! But hold—a thought occurs; as sure as can be, he has seen Miss Dudley. A word with you, young gentleman; come back.

Bel. Well, what's your pleasure?

Mrs Ful. You seem greatly captivated with this young lady; are you apt to fall in love thus at first sight?

Bel. Oh, yes: 'tis the only way I can ever fall in love: any man may tumble into a pit by surprise; none but a fool would walk into one by choice.

Mrs Ful. You are a hasty lover, it seems; have you spirit to be a generous one? They that will please the eye must not spare the purse.

Bel. Try me; put me to the proof! bring me to an interview with the dear girl that has thus captivated me, and see whether I have spirit to be grateful.

Mrs Ful. But how, pray, am I to know the girl you have set your heart on?

Bel. By an indescribable grace, that accompanies every look and action that falls from her: there can be but one such woman in the world, and nobody can mistake that one.

Mrs Ful. Well, if I should stumble upon this angel in my walks, where am I to find you? What's your name?

Bel. Upon my soul, I cann't tell you my name.

Mrs Ful. Not tell me! Why so?

Bel. Because I don't know what it is myself; as yet I have no name.

Mrs Ful. No name?

Bel. None; a friend, indeed, lent me his; but he forbad me to use it on any unworthy occasion.

Mrs Ful. But where is your place of abode?

Bel. I have none; I never slept a night in England in my life.

Mrs Ful. Hey-day!

Enter FULMER.

Ful. A fine case, truly, in a free country! a pretty pass things are come to, if a man is to be assaulted in his own house!

Mrs Ful. Who has assaulted you, my dear?

Ful. Who? why this captain Drawcansir, this old Dudley, my lodger: but I'll unlodge him; I'll unharbour him, I warrant.

Mrs Ful. Hush! hush! hold your tongue, man; pocket the affront, and be quiet; I've a scheme on foot will pay you a hundred beatings. Why you surprise me, Mr Fulmer; Captain Dudley assault you! Impossible!

Ful. Nay, I cann't call it an absolute assault; but he threatened me.

Mrs Ful. Oh, was that all? I thought how it would turn out——A likely thing, truly, for a person of his obliging compassionate turn! no, no, poor Captain Dudley; he has sorrows and distresses enough of his own to employ his spirits, without setting them against other people. Make it up as fast as you can: watch this gentleman out; follow him wherever he goes; and bring me word who and what he is; be sure you don't lose sight of him; I've other business in hand.

[*Exit Mrs* FUL.

Bel. Pray, sir, what sorrows and distresses have befallen this old gentleman you speak of?

Ful. Poverty, disappointment, and all the distresses attendant thereupon: sorrow enough of all conscience: I soon found how it was with him,

by his way of living, low enough of all reason: but what I overheard this morning put it out of all doubt.

Bel. What did you overhear this morning?

Ful. Why, it seems he wants to join his regiment, and has been beating the town over to raise a little money for that purpose upon his pay; but the climate, I find, where he is going, is so unhealthy, that nobody can be found to lend him any.

Bel. Why then, your town is a damned good-for-nothing town; and I wish I had never come into it.

Ful. That's what I say, sir; the hard-heartedness of some folks is unaccountable. There's an old Lady Rusport, a near relation of this gentleman's; she lives hard by here, opposite to Stockwell's, the great merchant; he sent to her a-begging, but to no purpose; though she is as rich as a Jew, she would not furnish him with a farthing.

Bel. Is the captain at home?

Ful. He is up stairs, sir.

Bel. Will you take the trouble to desire him to step hither? I want to speak to him.

Ful. I'll send him to you directly. I don't know what to make of this young man; but, if I live, I will find him out, or know the reason why. [*Exit* FUL.

Bel. I've lost the girl, it seems: that's clear: she was the first object of my pursuit; but the case of this poor officer touches me: and, after all, there may be as much true delight in rescuing a fellow-creature from distress, as there would be in plunging one into it——But, let me see—— It's a point that must be managed with some delicacy——Apropos! there's pen and ink——I've struck upon a method that will do.—[*Writes.*]—Ay, ay, this is the very thing: 'twas devilish lucky I happened to have these bills about me. There, there, fare you well; I'm glad to be rid of you; you stood a chance of being worse applied, I can tell you.

[*Encloses and seals the paper.*

FULMER *brings in Captain* DUDLEY.

Ful. That's the gentleman, sir.—I shall make bold, however, to lend an ear. [*Exit* FUL.

Dud. Have you any commands for me, sir?

Bel. Your name is Dudley, sir?

Dud. It is.

Bel. You command a company, I think, Captain Dudley?

Dud. I did: I am now upon half-pay.

Bel. You've served some time?

Dud. A pretty many years; long enough to see some people of more merit, and better interest than myself, made general officers.

Bel. Their merit I may have some doubt of; their interest I can readily give credit to: there is little promotion to be looked for in your profession, I believe, without friends, captain?

Dud. I believe so, too: have you any other business with me, may I ask?

Bel. Your patience for a moment. I was informed you was about to join your regiment in distant quarters abroad?

Dud. I have been soliciting an exchange to a company on full-pay, quartered at James's Fort, in Senegambia; but I'm afraid, I must drop the undertaking.

Bel. Why so, pray?

Dud. Why so, sir? 'Tis a home question for a perfect stranger to put; there is something very particular in all this.

Bel. If it is not impertinent, sir, allow me to ask you what reason you have for despairing of success?

Dud. Why really, sir, mine is an obvious reason for a soldier to have———Want of money; simply that.

Bel. May I beg to know the sum you have occasion for?

Dud. Truly, sir, I cannot exactly tell you on a sudden; nor is it, I suppose, of any great consequence to you to be informed; but I should guess, in the gross, that two hundred pounds would serve.

Bel. And do you find a difficulty in raising that sum upon your pay? 'Tis done every day.

Dud. The nature of the climate makes it difficult; I can get no one to ensure my life.

Bel. Oh! that's a circumstance may make for you, as well as against: in short, Captain Dudley, it so happens, that I can command the sum of two hundred pounds: seek, therefore, no farther; I'll accommodate you with it upon easy terms.

Dud. Sir! do I understand you rightly?——I beg your pardon; but am I to believe that you are in earnest?

Bel. What is your surprise? Is it an uncommon thing for a gentleman to speak truth? Or is it incredible that one fellow-creature should assist another?

Dud. I ask your pardon———May I beg to know to whom———Do you propose this in the way of business?

Bel. Entirely: I have no other business on earth.

Dud. Indeed!——You are not a broker, I'm persuaded?

Bel. I am not.

Dud. Nor an army agent, I think?

Bel. I hope you will not think the worse of me for being neither; in short, sir, if you will peruse this paper, it will explain to you who I am, and upon what terms I act. While you read it, I will step home, and fetch the money, and we will conclude the bargain without loss of time. In the mean while, good day to you. [*Exit hastily.*

Dud. Humph! there's something very odd in all this——let me see what we've got here—— This paper is to tell me who he is, and what are his terms: in the name of wonder, why has he sealed it?——Hey-day! what's here? two bank-notes of a hundred each! I cann't comprehend what this means. Hold; here's a writing; perhaps that will shew me. 'Accept this trifle: pursue your fortune, and prosper.' Am I in a dream? Is this a reality?

Enter Major O'FLAHERTY.

O'Fla. Save you, my dear! Is it you now that are Captain Dudley, I would ask? Whuh!—what's the hurry the man's in? If 'tis the lad that ran out of the shop you would overtake, you might as well stay where you are; by my soul, he's as nimble as a Croat; you are a full hour's march in the rear—Ay, faith, you may as well turn back, and give over the pursuit. Well, Captain Dudley, if that's your name, there's a letter for you. Read, man; read it; and I'll have a word with you after you have done.

Dud. More miracles on foot! So, so, from Lady Rusport.

O'Fla. You're right; it's from her ladyship.

Dud. Well, sir, I have cast my eye over it; 'tis short and peremptory; are you acquainted with the contents?

O'Fla. Not at all, my dear; not at all.

Dud. Have you any message from Lady Rusport?

O'Fla. Not a syllable, honey; only, when you've digested the letter, I've a little bit of a message to deliver you from myself.

Dud. And may I beg to know who yourself is?

O'Fla. Dennis O'Flaherty, at your service; a poor major of grenadiers; nothing better.

Dud. So much for your name and title, sir; now, be so good to favour me with your message.

O'Fla. Why, then, captain, I must tell you, I have promised Lady Rusport you shall do whatever it is she bids you to do in that letter there.

Dud. Ay, indeed? have you undertaken so much, major, without knowing either what she commands, or what I can perform?

O'Fla. That's your concern, my dear, not mine; I must keep my word, you know.

Dud. Or else, I suppose, you and I must measure swords?

O'Fla. Upon my soul, you've hit it!

Dud. That would hardly answer to either of us: you and I have, probably, had enough of fighting in our time before now.

O'Fla. Faith and troth, master Dudley, you may say that: 'tis thirty years, come the time, that I have followed the trade, and in a pretty many countries. Let me see—In the war before last I served in the Irish brigade, d'ye see; there, after bringing off the French monarch, I left his service, with a British bullet in my body, and this ribbon in my button-hole. Last war I followed the fortunes of the German eagle, in the corps of grenadiers; there I had my belly full of fighting, and a plentiful scarcity of every thing else. After six-and-twenty engagements, great and small, I went off, with this gash on my skull, and a kiss of the empress queen's sweet hand, (Heaven bless it!) for my pains. Since the peace, my dear, I took a little turn with the confederates there in Poland—but such another set of madcaps! by the lord Harry, I never knew what it was they were scuffling about!

Dud. Well, major, I won't add another action to the list—you shall keep your promise with Lady Rusport; she requires me to leave London; I shall go in a few days, and you may take what credit you please from my compliance.

O'Fla. Give me your hand, my dear boy! This will make her my own: when that's the case, we shall be brothers, you know, and we'll share her fortune between us.

Dud. Not so, major: the man who marries Lady Rusport will have a fair title to her whole fortune without division. But, I hope, your expectations of prevailing are founded upon good reasons?

O'Fla. Upon the best grounds in the world.—First, I think she will comply, because she is a woman: secondly, I am persuaded she won't hold out long, because she's a widow: and thirdly, I make sure of her, because I've married five wives (*en militaire*, captain), and never failed yet; and, for what I know, they're all alive and merry at this very hour.

Dud. Well, sir, go on and prosper: if you can inspire Lady Rusport with half your charity, I shall think you deserve all her fortune: at present, I must beg your excuse: good morning to you.

[*Exit*

O'Fla. A good sensible man, and very much of a soldier! I did not care if I was better acquainted with him: but 'tis an awkward kind of country for that; the English, I observe, are close friends, but distant acquaintance. I suspect the old lady has not been over generous to poor Dudley; I shall give her a little touch about that: upon my soul, I know but one excuse a person can have for giving nothing——and that is, like myself, having nothing to give. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*Changes to Lady* RUSPORT'S *House. A Dressing Room.*

Enter Miss RUSPORT *and* LUCY.

Char. Well, Lucy, you've dislodged the old lady at last; but methought you was a tedious time about it.

Lucy. A tedious time, indeed; I think they, who have least to spare, contrive to throw the most away. I thought I should never have got her out of the house.

Char. Why, she's as deliberate in canvassing every article of her dress, as an ambassador would be in settling the preliminaries of a treaty.

Lucy. There was a new hood and handkerchief, that had come express from Holborn-hill on the occasion, that took as much time in adjusting——

Char. As they did in making, and she was as vain of them as an old maid of a young lover.

Lucy. Or a young lover of himself. Then, madam, this being a visit of great ceremony to a person of distinction, at the west end of the town, the old chariot was dragged forth on the occasion, with strict charges to dress out the box with the leopard-skin hammer-cloth.

Char. Yes, and to hang the false tails on the miserable stumps of the old crawling cattle.——

Well, well, pray Heaven the crazy affair don't break down again with her—at least, till she gets to her journey's end! But where's Charles Dudley? Run down, dear girl, and be ready to let him in; I think he's as long in coming as she was in going.

Lucy. Why, indeed, madam, you seem the more alert of the two, I must say. [*Exit.*

Char. Now, the deuce take the girl for putting that notion into my head! I'm sadly afraid Dudley does not like me: so much encouragement as I have given him to declare himself, I never could get a word from him on the subject. This may be very honourable, but, upon my life, it's very provoking. By the way, I wonder how I look today: Oh, shockingly! hideously pale! like a witch! This is the old lady's glass; and she has left some of her wrinkles on it. How frightfully have I put on my cap! all awry! and my hair dressed so unbecomingly! altogether, I am a most complete fright.

CHARLES DUDLEY *comes in, unobserved.*

Charles. That I deny.

Char. Ah!

Charles. Quarrelling with your glass, cousin?—Make it up; make it up, and be friends: it cannot compliment you more, than by reflecting you as you are.

Char. Well, I vow, my dear Charles, that is delightfully said, and deserves my very best curtsey: your flattery, like a rich jewel, has a value not only from its superior lustre, but from its extraordinary scarceness: I verily think this is the only civil speech you ever directed to my person in your life.

Charles. And I ought to ask pardon of your good sense for having done it now.

Char. Nay, now you relapse again: don't you know, if you keep well with a woman on the great score of beauty, she'll never quarrel with you on the trifling article of good sense? But any thing serves to fill up a dull yawning hour with an insipid cousin; you have brighter moments, and warmer spirits, for the dear girl of your heart.

Charles. Oh, fie upon you! fie upon you!

Char. You blush, and the reason is apparent: you are a novice in hypocrisy; but no practice can make a visit of ceremony pass for a visit of choice. Love is ever before its time; friendship is apt to lag a little after it: pray, Charles, did you make any extraordinary haste hither?

Charles. By your question, I see you acquit me of the impertinence of being in love.

Char. But why impertinence? Why the impertinence of being in love? You have one language for me, Charles, and another for the woman of your affection.

Charles. You are mistaken; the woman of my affection shall never hear any other language from me, than what I use to you.

Char. I am afraid then, you'll never make yourself understood by her.

Charles. It is not fit I should; there is no need of love to make me miserable; 'tis wretchedness enough to be a beggar.

Char. A beggar, do you call yourself? O Charles, Charles! rich in every merit and accomplishment, whom may you not aspire to! And why think you so unworthily of our sex, as to conclude there is not one to be found with sense to discern your virtue, and generosity to reward it?

Charles. You distress me; I must beg to hear no more.

Char. Well, I can be silent. Thus does he always serve me, whenever I am about to disclose myself to him. [*Aside.*

Charles. Why do you not banish me and my misfortunes for ever from your thoughts?

Char. Ay, wherefore do I not, since you never allowed me a place in yours! But go, sir; I have no right to stay you; go where your heart directs you; go to the happy, the distinguished fair one.

Charles. Now, by all that's good, you do me wrong: there is no such fair one for me to go to; nor have I an acquaintance among the sex, yourself excepted, which answers to that description.

Char. Indeed?

Charles. In very truth: there, then, let us drop the subject. May you be happy, though I never can.

Char. O Charles! give me your hand: if I have offended you, I ask your pardon: you have been long acquainted with my temper, and know how to bear with its infirmities.

Charles. Thus, my dear Charlotte, let us seal our reconciliation. [*Kissing her hand.*] Bear with thy infirmities! By Heaven, I know not any one failing in thy whole composition, except that of too great a partiality for an undeserving man.

Char. And you are now taking the very course to augment that failing. A thought strikes me: I have a commission that you must absolutely execute for me: I have immediate occasion for the sum of two hundred pounds: you know my fortune is shut up till I am of age; take this paltry box (it contains my ear-rings, and some other baubles I have no use for), carry it to our opposite neighbour, Mr Stockwell (I don't know where else to apply), leave it as a deposit in his hands, and beg him to accommodate me with that sum.

Charles. Dear Charlotte, what are you about to do? How can you possibly want two hundred pounds?

Char. How can I possibly do without it, you mean? Doesn't every lady want two hundred pounds? Perhaps I have lost it at play: perhaps I mean to win as much to it; perhaps I want it for two hundred different uses.

Charles. Pooh! Pooh! all this is nothing; don't I know you never play?

Char. You mistake; I have a spirit to set not only this trifle, but my whole fortune, upon a stake: therefore, make no wry faces, but do as I bid you: you will find Mr Stockwell a very honourable gentleman.

Enter LUCY *in haste.*

Lucy. Dear madam, as I live, here comes the old lady in a hackney-coach.

Char. The old chariot has given her a second tumble: away with you! you know your way out without meeting her: take the box, and do as I desire you.

Charles. I must not dispute your orders. Farewell! [*Exeunt* CHARLES *and* CHARLOTTE.

SCENE V.

Enter Lady RUSPORT, *leaning on Major* O'FLAHERTY'S *arm.*

O'Fla. Rest yourself upon my arm; never spare it; 'tis strong enough: it has stood harder service than you can put it to.

Lucy. Mercy upon me, what is the matter! I am frightened out of my wits: has your ladyship had an accident?

Lady Rus. O, Lucy! the most untoward one in nature! I know not how I shall repair it.

O'Fla. Never go about to repair it, my lady; even build a new one; 'twas but a crazy piece of business at best.

Lucy. Bless me! is the old chariot broke down with you again?

Lady Rus. Broke, child! I don't know what might have been broke, if, by great good fortune, this obliging gentleman had not been at hand to assist me.

Lucy. Dear madam, let me run and fetch you a cup of the cordial drops.

Lady Rus. Do, Lucy. Alas, sir! ever since I lost my husband, my poor nerves have been shook to pieces: there hangs his beloved picture: that precious relic, and a plentiful jointure, is all that remains to console me for the best of men.

O'Fla. Let me see: i'faith a comely personage! by his fur cloak, I suppose he was in the Russian service; and, by the gold chain round his neck, I should guess he had been honoured with the order of St Catharine.

Lady Rus. No, no; he meddled with no St Catharines: that's the habit he wore in his mayorality: Sir Stephen was lord-mayor of London: but he is gone, and has left me a poor, weak, solitary widow behind him.

O'Fla. By all means, then, take a strong, able, hearty man to repair his loss. If such a plain fellow as one Dennis O'Flaherty can please you, I think I may venture to say, without any disparagement to the gentleman in the fur-gown there——

Lady Rus. What are you going to say? Don't shock my ears with any comparisons, I desire.

O'Fla. Not I, by my soul! I don't believe there's any comparison in the case.

Lady Rus. Oh, are you come? Give me the drops; I'm all in a flutter!

O'Fla. Hark'e, sweetheart, what are those same drops? have you any more left in the bottle? I didn't care if I took a little sip of them myself.

Lucy. Oh, sir, they are called the cordial restorative elixir, or the nervous golden drops;—they are only for ladies' cases.

O'Fla. Yes, yes, my dear, there are gentlemen as well as ladies that stand in need of those same golden drops: they'd suit my case to a tittle.

[*Drinks.*

Lady Rus. Well, major, did you give old Dudley my letter? and will the silly man do as I bid him, and be gone?

O'Fla. You are obeyed: he's on his march.

Lady Rus. That's well; you have managed this matter to perfection. I didn't think he would have been so easily prevailed upon.

O'Fla. At the first word; no difficulty in life; 'twas the very thing he was determined to do, before I came: I never met a more obliging gentleman.

Lady Rus. Well, 'tis no matter, so I am but rid of him and his distresses: would you believe it, Major O'Flaherty, it was but this morning he sent a-begging to me for money to fit him out upon some wild-goose expedition to the coast of Africa, I know not where?

O'Fla. Well, you sent him what he wanted?

Lady Rus. I sent him what he deserved, a flat refusal.

O'Fla. You refused him?

Lady Rus. Most undoubtedly.

O'Fla. You sent him nothing?

Lady Rus. Not a shilling.

O'Fla. Good morning to you—Your servant—

[*Going.*

Lady Rus. Hey-day! what ails the man? where are you going?

O'Fla. Out of your house, before the roof falls on my head—to poor Dudley, to share the little modicum that thirty years hard service has left me. I wish it was more for his sake.

Lady Rus. Very well, sir; take your course; I sha'n't attempt to stop you: I shall survive it; it will not break my heart, if I never see you more.

O'Fla. Break your heart! No, o'my conscience will it not. You preach, and you pray, and you turn up your eyes, and all the while you're as hard-hearted as a hyena! A hyena, truly! By my soul, there isn't, in the whole creation, so savage an animal as a human creature without pity!

[*Exit.*

Lady Rus. A hyena, truly! Where did the fellow blunder upon that word? Now the deuce take him for using it, and the Macaronics for inventing it! [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* STOCKWELL'S *House.*

Enter STOCKWELL *and* BELCOUR.

Stock. GRATIFY me so far, however, Mr Belcour, as to see Miss Rusport; carry her the sum she wants, and return the poor girl her box of diamonds, which Dudley left in my hands; you know what to say on the occasion better than I do: that part of your commission I leave to your own discretion, and you may season it with what gallantry you think fit.

Bel. You could not have pitched upon a greater bungler at gallantry than myself, if you had rummaged every company in the city, and the whole court of aldermen into the bargain. Part of your errand, however, I will do; but whether it shall be with an ill grace or a good one, depends upon the caprice of a moment, the humour of the lady, the mode of our meeting, and a thousand undefinable small circumstances, that nevertheless determine us upon all the great occasions of life.

Stock. I persuade myself you will find Miss Rusport an ingenious, worthy, animated girl.

Bel. Why, I like her the better, as a woman; but name her not to me as a wife! No, if ever I marry, it must be a staid, sober, considerate damsel, with blood in her veins as cold as a turtle's; quick of scent as a vulture, when danger's in the wind; wary and sharp-sighted as a hawk, when treachery is on foot: with such a companion at my elbow, for ever whispering in my ear—have a care of this man, he's a cheat! don't go near that woman, she's a jilt! over head there's a scaffold! under foot there's a well! Oh! sir, such a woman might lead me up and down this great city without difficulty or danger; but, with a girl of Miss Rusport's complexion, heaven and earth, sir! we should be duped, undone, and distracted, in a fortnight.

Stock. Ha, ha, ha! Why, you are become wondrous circumspect of a sudden, pupil; and if you can find such a prudent damsel as you describe, you have my consent——only beware how you chuse! Discretion is not the reigning quality amongst the fine ladies of the present time; and I think, in Miss Rusport's particular, I have given you no bad counsel.

Bel. Well, well, if you'll fetch me the jewels, I believe I can undertake to carry them to her; but as for the money, I'll have nothing to do with that; Dudley would be your fittest ambassador on that occasion, and, if I mistake not, the most agreeable to the lady.

Stock. Why, indeed, from what I know of the matter, it may not improbably be destined to find its way into his pockets [*Exit.*

Bel. Then, depend upon it, these are not the only trinkets she means to dedicate to Captain Dudley. As for me, Stockwell indeed wants me to marry; but, till I can get this bewitching girl, this incognita, out of my head, I can never think of any other woman.

Enter Servant, and delivers a letter.

Hey-day! Where can I have picked up a correspondent already! 'Tis a most execrable manuscript—Let me see—Martha Fulmer—Who is Martha Fulmer? Pshaw! I won't be at the trouble of decyphering her damned pot-hooks. Hold, hold, hold! what have we got here?

'Dear Sir,

'I've discovered the lady you was so much smitten with, and can procure you an interview with her. If you can be as generous to a pretty girl, as you was to a paltry old captain,'—how did she find that out?—'you need not despair. Come to me immediately; the lady is now in my house, and expects you.

Yours,

MARTHA FULMER.'

O thou dear, lovely, and enchanting paper, which I was about to tear into a thousand scraps, devoutly I entreat thy pardon! I have slighted thy contents, which are delicious; slandered thy characters, which are divine; and all the atonement I can make, is implicitly to obey thy mandates.

STOCKWELL *returns.*

Stock. Mr Belcour, here are the jewels; this letter incloses bills for the money; and, if you will deliver it to Miss Rusport, you'll have no farther trouble on that score.

Bel. Ah, sir! the letter which I have been reading disqualifies me for delivering the letter which you have been writing. I have other game on foot; the loveliest girl my eyes ever feasted upon, is started in view, and the world cannot now divert me from pursuing her.

Stock. Hey-day! what has turned you thus on a sudden?

Bel. A woman: one that can turn, and overturn me and my tottering resolutions every way she will. Oh, sir, if this is folly in me, you must rail at nature: you must chide the sun, that was vertical at my birth, and would not wink upon my nakedness, but swaddled me in the broadest, hottest glare of his meridian beams.

Stock. Mere rhapsody! mere childish rhapsody! the libertine's familiar plea——Nature made us, 'tis true; but we are the responsible creators of our own faults and follies.

Bel. Sir!

Stock. Slave of every face you meet, some hussy has inveigled you, some handsome profligate (the town is full of them); and, when once fairly bankrupt in constitution, as well as fortune, nature no longer serves as your excuse for being vicious, necessity, perhaps, will stand your friend, and you'll reform.

Bel. You are severe.

Stock. It fits me to be so—it well becomes a father——I would say a friend——How strangely I forget myself—How difficult it is to counterfeit indifference, and put a mask upon the heart! ——I've struck him hard; he reddens!

Bel. How could you tempt me so? Had you not inadvertently dropped the name of father, I fear our friendship, short as it has been, would scarce have held me——But even your mistake I reverence——Give me your hand—'tis over.

Stock. Generous young man!—let me embrace you—How shall I hide my tears? I have been to blame; because I bore you the affection of a father, I rashly took up the authority of one. I ask your pardon——pursue your course; I have no right to stop it.——What would you have me do with these things?

Bel. This, if I might advise; carry the money to Miss Rusport immediately: never let generosity wait for its materials; that part of the business presses. Give me the jewels; I'll find an opportunity of delivering them into her hands: and your visit may pave the way for my reception. [*Exit.*

Stock. Be it so: good morning to you. Farewell advice! Away goes he upon the wing for pleasure! What various passions he awakens in me! He pains, yet pleases me; affrights, offends, yet grows upon my heart. His very failings set him off—for ever trespassing, for ever atoning, I almost think he would not be so perfect, were he free from fault: I must dissemble longer; and yet how painful the experiment!——Even now he's gone upon some wild adventure; and who can tell what mischief may befal him? O nature, what it is to be a father! Just such a thoughtless headlong thing was I, when I beguiled his mother into love. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* FULMER'S *House.*

Enter FULMER *and his Wife.*

Ful. I tell you, Patty, you are a fool to think of bringing him and Miss Dudley together; 'twill ruin every thing, and blow your whole scheme up to the moon at once.

Mrs Ful. Why, sure, Mr Fulmer, I may be allowed to rear a chicken of my own hatching, as they say! Who first sprung the thought but I, pray? Who first contrived the plot? Who proposed the letter but I, I?

Ful. And who dogged the gentleman home? Who found out his name, fortune, connexions; that he was a West Indian, fresh landed, and full of cash; a gull to our heart's content; a hot-brained, headlong spark, that would run into our trap, like a wheat-ear under a turf?

Mrs Ful. Hark! he's come! disappear, march, and leave the field open to my machinations.

[*Exit* FULMER.

Enter BELCOUR.

Bel. O, thou dear minister to my happiness, let me embrace thee! Why, thou art my polar star, my propitious constellation, by which I navigate my impatient bark into the port of pleasure and delight!

Mrs Ful. Oh, you men are sly creatures! Do you remember now, you cruel, what you said to me this morning?

Bel. All a jest, a frolic; never think on't; bury it for ever in oblivion. Thou! why, thou art all over nectar and ambrosia, powder of pearl and odour of roses; thou hast the youth of Hebe, the beauty of Venus, and the pen of Sappho! But, in the name of all that's lovely, where's the lady? I expected to find her with you.

Mrs Ful. No doubt you did; and these raptures were designed for her; but where have you loitered? the lady's gone; you are too late. Girls of her sort are not to be kept waiting, like negro slaves in your sugar plantations.

Bel. Gone! whither is she gone? tell me, that I may follow her.

Mrs Ful. Hold, hold! not so fast, young gentleman; this is a case of some delicacy; should Captain Dudley know that I introduced you to his daughter, he is a man of such scrupulous honour——

Bel. What do you tell me! is she daughter to the old gentleman I met here this morning?

Mrs Ful. The same; him you was so generous to.

Bel. There's an end of the matter, then, at once: it shall never be said of me, that I took advantage of the father's necessities to trepan the daughter. [*Going.*

Mrs Ful. So, so, I've made a wrong cast; he's one of your conscientious sinners, I find; but I won't lose him thus——Ha, ha, ha!

Bel. What is it you laugh at?

Mrs Ful. Your absolute inexperience: have you lived so very little time in this country, as not to know, that, between young people of equal ages, the term of sister often is a cover for that of mistress? This young lady is, in that sense of the word, sister to young Dudley, and consequently daughter to my old lodger.

Bel. Indeed! are you serious?

Mrs Ful. Can you doubt it? I must have been pretty well assured of that before I invited you hither.

Bel. That's true: she cannot be a woman of honour; and Dudley is an unconscionable young rogue to think of keeping one fine girl in pay, by raising contributions on another: he shall therefore give her up; she is a dear, bewitching, mischievous, little devil; and he shall positively give her up.

Mrs Ful. Ay, now the freak has taken you again! I say, give her up!—there's one way, indeed, and certain of success.

Bel. What's that?

Mrs Ful. Out-bid him; never dream of out-blustering him; buy out his lease of possession, and leave her to manage his ejectment.

Bel. Is she so venal? Never fear me then: when beauty is the purchase, I sha'n't think much of the price.

Mrs Ful. All things, then, will be made easy enough: let me see; some little genteel present to begin with: what have you got about you? Ay, search; I can bestow it to advantage; there's no time to be lost.

Bel. Hang it! confound it; a plague upon't, say I! I haven't a guinea left in my pocket; I parted from my whole stock here this morning, and have forgot to supply myself since.

Mrs Ful. Mighty well! let it pass; there's an end; think no more of the lady, that's all.

Bel. Distraction! think no more of her! Let me only step home, and provide myself, I'll be back with you in an instant.

Mrs Ful. Pooh, pooh! that's a wretched shift: have you nothing of value about you? Money's a coarse, slovenly vehicle, fit only to bribe electors in a borough; there are more graceful ways of purchasing a lady's favours: rings, trinkets, jewels!

Bel. Jewels! Gadso, I protest I had forgot! I have a case of jewels—but they won't do, I must not part from them: no, no; they are appropriated; they are none of my own.

Mrs Ful. Let me see, let me see! Ay, now, this were something-like: ——pretty creatures, how they sparkle! these would ensure success.

Bel. Indeed!

Mrs Ful. These would make her your own for ever.

Bel. Then, the deuce take them for belonging to another person! I could find in my heart to give them the girl, and swear I've lost them.

Mrs Ful. Ay, do; say they were stolen out of your pocket.

Bel. No, hang it, that's dishonourable: here, give me the paltry things; I'll give you an order on my merchant for double their value.

Mrs Ful. An order! No; order me no orders upon merchants, with their value received, and three days grace; their noting, protesting, and indorsing, and all their counting-house formalities; I'll have nothing to do with them: leave your diamonds with me, and give your order for the value of them to the owner: the money would be as good as the trinkets, I warrant you.

Bel. Hey! how! I never thought of that: but a breach of trust—'tis impossible; I never can consent; therefore, give me the jewels back again.

Mrs Ful. Take them: I am now to tell you the lady is in this house.

Bel. In this house!

Mrs Ful. Yes, sir, in this very house—but what of that? You have got what you like better—your toys, your trinkets. Go, go! oh! you're a man of a notable spirit, are you not?

Bel. Provoking creature! bring me to the sight of the dear creature, and dispose of me as you think fit.

Mrs Ful. And of the diamonds too?

Bel. Damn them! I would there was not such a bauble in nature! But come, come, dispatch: if I had the throne of Delhi, I should give it to her.

Mrs Ful. Swear to me then that you will keep within bounds—remember, she passes for the sister of young Dudley. Oh! if you come to your flights and your rhapsodies, she'll be off in an instant!

Bel. Never fear me.

Mrs Ful. You must expect to hear her talk of her father, as she calls him, and her brother, and your bounty to her family.

Bel Ay, ay; never mind what she talks of, only bring her.

Mrs Ful. You'll be prepared upon that head?

Bel. I shall be prepared, never fear: away with you!

Mrs Ful. But hold! I had forgot: not a word of the diamonds—leave that matter to my management.

Bel. Hell and vexation! Get out of the room, or I shall run distracted. [*Exit Mrs* FULMER.] Of a certain, Belcour, thou art born to be the fool of woman: sure no man sins with so much repentance, or repents with so little amendment, as I do. I cannot give away another person's property—honour forbids me: and I positively cannot give up the girl—love, passion, constitution—every thing protests against that. How shall I decide? I cannot bring myself to break a trust; and I am not at present in the humour to baulk my inclination. Is there no middle way? Let me consider——There is, there is: my good genius has presented me with one—apt, obvious, honourable: the girl shall not go without her baubles—I'll not go without the girl—Miss Rusport sha'n't lose her diamonds—I'll save Dudley from destruction—and every party shall be a gainer by the project.

Enter Mrs FULMER, *introducing Miss* DUDLEY.

Mrs Ful. Miss Dudley, this is the worthy gentleman you wish to see; this is Mr Belcour.

Lou. As I live, the very man that beset me in the streets! [*Aside.*

Bel. An angel, by this light! Oh, I am gone past all retrieving! [*Aside.*

Lou. Mrs Fulmer, sir, informs me you are the gentleman from whom my father has received such civilities.

Bel. Oh! never name them.

Lou. Pardon me, Mr Belcour; they must be both named and remembered; and if my father was here——

Bel. I am much better pleased with his representative.

Lou. That title is my brother's, sir; I have no claim to it.

Bel. I believe it.

Lou. But, as neither he nor my father were fortunate enough to be at home, I could not resist the opportunity——

Bel. Nor I neither, by my soul, madam! let us improve it, therefore. I am in love with you to distraction—I was charmed at the first glance—I attempted to accost you—you fled—I followed—but was defeated of an interview; at length I have obtained one, and seize the opportunity of casting my person and fortune at your feet.

Lou. You astonish me! Are you in your senses? or do you make a jest of my misfortunes? Do

you ground pretences on your generosity, or do you make a practice of this folly with every woman you meet?

Bel. Upon my life, no: as you are the handsomest woman I ever met, so you are the first to whom I ever made the like professions: as for my generosity, madam, I must refer you, on that score, to this goood lady, who, I believe, has something to offer in my behalf.

Lou. Don't build upon that, sir; I must have better proofs of your generosity, than the mere divestment of a little superfluous dross, before I can credit the sincerity of a profession so abruptly delivered. [*Exit hastily.*

Bel. O ye gods and goddesses! how her anger animates her beauty! [*Going out.*

Mrs Ful. Stay, sir; if you stir a step after her, I renounce your interest for ever: why, you'll ruin every thing!

Bel. Well, I must have her, cost what it will: I see she understands her own value though: a little superfluous dross, truly! She must have better proofs of my generosity!

Mrs Ful. 'Tis exactly as I told you—your money she calls dross—she's too proud to stain her fingers with your coin: bait your hook well with jewels—try that experiment, and she's your own.

Bel. Take them—let them go—lay them at her feet—I must get out of the scrape as I can—my propensity is irresistible—there—you have them—they are yours—they are hers—but remember they are a trust—I commit them to her keeping till I can buy them off with something she shall think more valuable: now tell me, when shall I meet her?

Mrs Ful. How can I tell that? Don't you see what an alarm you've put her into? Oh you're a rare one! But go your ways for this while; leave her to my management, and come to me at seven this evening; but remember not to bring empty pockets with you—Ha, ha, ha, Ha! [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE III.—*Lady* RUSPORT'S *House.*

Enter Miss RUSPORT, *followed by a Servant.*

Char. Desire Mr Stockwell to walk in. [*Exit servant.*

Enter STOCKWELL.

Stock. Madam, your most obedient servant: I am honoured with your commands, by Captain Dudley, and have brought the money with me as you directed—I understand the sum you have occasion for is two hundred pounds.

Char. It is, sir—I am quite confounded at your taking this trouble upon yourself, Mr Stockwell.

Stock. There is a bank-note, madam, to the amount: your jewels are in safe hands, and will be delivered to you directly. If I had been happy in being better known to you, I should have hoped you would not have thought it necessary to place a deposit in my hands for so trifling a sum as you have now required me to supply you with.

Char. The baubles I sent you may very well be spared; and, as they are the only security in my present situation I can give you, I could wish you would retain them in your hands: when I am of age (which, if I live a few months, I shall be), I will replace your favour with thanks.

Stock. It is obvious, Miss Rusport, that your charms will suffer no impeachment by the absence of those superficial ornaments; but they should be seen in the suit of a woman of fashion, not as creditors, to whom you are indebted for your appearance, but as subservient attendants, which help to make up your equipage.

Char. Mr Stockwell is determined not to wrong the confidence I reposed in his politeness.

Stock. I have only to request, madam, that you will allow Mr Belcour, a young gentleman in whose happiness I particularly interest myself, to have the honour of delivering you the box of jewels.

Char. Most gladly; any friend of yours cannot fail of being welcome here.

Stock. I flatter myself you will not find him totally undeserving your good opinion—an education, not of the strictest kind, and strong animal spirits, are apt, sometimes, to betray him into youthful irregularities: but an high principle of honour, and an uncommon benevolence, in the eye of candour will, I hope, atone for any faults, by which these good qualities are not impaired.

Char. I dare say Mr Belcour's behaviour wants no apology—we've no right to be over strict in canvassing the morals of a common acquaintance.

Stock. I wish it may be my happiness to see Mr Belcour in the list, not of your common, but particular acquaintance—of your friends, Miss Rusport—I dare not be more explicit.

Char. Nor need you, Mr Stockwell: I shall be studious to deserve his friendship; and, though I have long since unalterably placed my affection on another, I trust I have not left myself insensible to the merits of Mr Belcour; and hope that neither he nor you will, for that reason, think me less worthy of your good opinion and regards.

Stock. Miss Rusport, I sincerely wish you happy: I have no doubt you have placed your affection on a deserving man; and I have no right to combat your choice. [*Exit.*

Char. How honourable is that behaviour! Now, if Charles were here, I should be happy. The old lady is so fond of her new Irish acquaintance, that I have the whole house at my disposal. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

Enter BELCOUR, *preceded by a Servant.*

Ser. I ask your honour's pardon; I thought my young lady was here: who shall I inform her would speak to her?

Bel. Belcour is my name, sir; and pray beg your lady to put herself in no hurry on my account; for I'd sooner see the devil than see her

face.—[*Exit Servant.*]—In the name of all that's mischievous, why did Stockwell drive me hither in such haste? A pretty figure, truly, I shall make! an ambassador without credentials. Blockhead that I was, to charge myself with her diamonds——officious, meddling puppy! Now they are irretrievably gone: that suspicious jade Fulmer wou'dn't part even with a sight of them, though I would have ransomed them at twice their value.—Now must I trust to my poor wits to bring me off: a lamentable dependence! Fortune be my helper:——Here comes the girl.—— If she is noble-minded, as she is said to be, she will forgive me——if not, 'tis a lost cause; for I have not thought of one word in my excuse.

Enter CHARLOTTE.

Char. Mr Belcour, I'm proud to see you: your friend, Mr Stockwell, prepared me to expect this honour; and I am happy in the opportunity of being known to you.

Bel. A fine girl, by my soul! Now what a cursed hang-dog do I look like! [*Aside.*

Char. You are newly arrived in this country, sir?

Bel. Just landed, madam, just set a-shore, with a large cargo of Muscovado sugars, rum-puncheons, mahogany slabs, wet sweetmeats, and green paroquets.

Char. May I ask you how you like London, sir?

Bel. To admiration: I think the town and the town's-folk are exactly suited; 'tis a great, rich, overgrown, noisy, tumultuous place: the whole morning is a bustle to get money, and the whole afternoon is a hurry to spend it.

Char. Are these all the observations you have made?

Bel. No, madam; I have observed the women are very captivating, and the men very soon caught.

Char. Ay, indeed! Whence do you draw that conclusion?

Bel. From infallible guides; the first remark I collect from what I now see, the second from what I now feel.

Char. Oh, the deuce take you! But, to wave this subject—I believe, sir, this was a visit of business, not compliment: was it not?

Bel. Ay—now comes on my execution.

Char. You have some foolish trinkets of mine, Mr Belcour, haven't you?

Bel. No, in truth, they are gone in search of a trinket still more foolish than themselves. [*Aside.*

Char. Some diamonds, I mean, sir. Mr Stockwell informed me you was charged with them.

Bel. Oh, yes, madam—but I have the most treacherous memory in life—here they are: pray put them up; they're all right; you need not examine them. [*Gives a box.*

Char. Hey-day!—right, sir! Why these are not my diamonds; these are quite different; and, as it should seem, of much greater value.

Bel. Upon my life, I'm glad on't! for then, I hope, you value them more than your own.

Char. As a purchaser I should, but not as an owner: you mistake; these belong to somebody else.

Bel. 'Tis yours, I'm afraid, that belong to somebody else.

Char. What is it you mean? I must insist upon your taking them back again.

Bel. Pray, madam, don't do that; I shall infallibly lose them: I have the worst luck with diamonds of any man living.

Char. That you might well say, was you to give me these in the place of mine. But pray, sir, what is the reason of all this? Why have you changed the jewels, and where have you disposed of mine?

Bel. Miss Rusport, I cannot invent a lie for my life; and, if it was to save it, I cou'dn't tell one: I am an idle, dissipated, unthinking fellow, not worth your notice: in short, I am a West Indian; and you must try me according to the charter of my colony, not by a jury of English spinsters. The truth is, I've given away your jewels; caught with a pair of sparkling eyes, whose lustre blinded theirs, I served your property as I should my own, and lavished it away. Let me not totally despair of your forgiveness! I frequently do wrong, but never with impunity: if your displeasure is added to my own, my punishment will be too severe. When I parted from the jewels, I had not the honour of knowing their owner.

Char. Mr Belcour, your sincerity charms me! I enter at once into your character, and I make all the allowances for it you can desire. I take your jewels for the present, because I know there is no other way of reconciling you to yourself; but, if I give way to your spirit in one point, you must yield to mine in another: remember, I will not keep more than the value of my own jewels: there is no need to be pillaged by more than one woman at a time, sir.

Bel. Now, may every blessing that can crown your virtues, and reward your beauty, be showered upon you! May you meet admiration without envy, love without jealousy, and old age without malady! May the man of your heart be ever constant, and may you never meet a less penitent or less grateful offender than myself!

Enter Servant, who delivers a letter.

Char. Does your letter require such haste?

Ser. I was bid to give it into your own hands, madam.

Char. From Charles Dudley, I see——Have I your permission? Good Heaven, what do I read! Mr Belcour, you are concerned in this—"Dear Charlotte, in the midst of our distress, Providence has cast a benefactor in our way, after the most unexpected manner: a young West Indian, rich, and with a warmth of heart peculiar to his climate, has rescued my father from his troubles, satisfied his wants, and enabled him to accomplish his exchange: when I relate to you the manner in which this was done, you will be charmed. I can only now add, that it was by chance we found out that his name is Belcour, and that he

is a friend of Mr Stockwell's. I lose not a moment's time in making you acquainted with this fortunate event, for reasons which delicacy obliges me to suppress; but, perhaps, if you have not received the money on your jewels, you will not think it necessary now to do it. I have the honour to be,

Dear madam,
Most faithfully yours,
CHARLES DUDLEY."

Is this your doing, sir? Never was generosity so worthily exerted.

Bel. Or so greatly overpaid.

Char. After what you have now done for this noble, but indigent family, let me not scruple to unfold the whole situation of my heart to you.—Know, then, sir, (and don't think the worse of me for the frankness of my declaration), that such is my attachment to the son of that worthy officer, whom you relieved, that the moment I am of age, and in possession of my fortune, I should hold myself the happiest of women to share it with young Dudley.

Bel. Say you so, madam? Then, let me perish if I don't love and reverence you above all womankind! and, if such is your generous resolution, never wait till you're of age; life is too short, pleasure too fugitive; the soul grows narrower every hour. I'll equip you for your escape; I'll convey you to the man of your heart, and away with you, then, to the first hospitable parson that will take you in.

Char. O blessed be the torrid zone for ever, whose rapid vegetation quickens nature into such benignity! These latitudes are made for politics and philosophy; friendship has no root in this soil. But, had I spirit to accept your offer, which is not improbable, wouldn't it be a mortifying thing for a fond girl to find herself mistaken, and sent back to her home like a vagrant? and such, for what I know, might be my case.

Bel. Then, he ought to be proscribed the society of mankind for ever.——Ay, ay; 'tis the sham sister that makes him thus indifferent; 'twill be a meritorious office to take that girl out of the way.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Miss Dudley to wait on you, madam.

Bel. Who?

Ser. Miss Dudley.

Char. What's the matter, Mr Belcour? Are you frighted at the name of a pretty girl? 'Tis the sister of him we were speaking of—Pray, admit her.

Bel. The sister! So, so! he has imposed on her, too—This is an extraordinary visit, truly!—Upon my soul, the assurance of some folks is not to be accounted for. [*Aside.*

Char. I insist upon your not running away; you'll be charmed with Louisa Dudley.

Bel. Oh, yes, I am charmed with her.

Char. You have seen her, then, have you?

Bel. Yes, yes; I've seen her.

Char. Well, isn't she a delightful girl?

Bel. Very delightful.

Char. Why, you answer as if you was in a court of justice! O' my conscience, I believe you are caught! I've a notion she has tricked you out of your heart.

Bel. I believe she has, and you out of your jewels; for, to tell you the truth, she's the very person I gave them to.

Char. You gave her my jewels! Louisa Dudley my jewels? Admirable! inimitable! Oh, the sly little jade! But hush, here she comes; I don't know how I shall keep my countenance.

Enter LOUISA.

My dear, I'm rejoiced to see you: how d'ye do? I beg leave to introduce Mr Belcour, a very worthy friend of mine: I believe, Louisa, you have seen him before.

Lou. I have met the gentleman.

Char. You have met the gentleman! well, sir, and you have met the lady: in short, you have met each other; why, then, don't you speak to each other? How you both stand! tongue-tied, and fixed as statues!———Ha, ha, ha! Why you'll fall asleep by-and-by.

Lou. Fy upon you, fy upon you! is this fair?

Bel. Upon my soul, I never looked so like a fool in my life! the assurance of that girl puts me quite down. [*Aside.*

Char. Sir——Mr Belcour——Was it your pleasure to advance any thing? Not a syllable. Come, Louisa, women's wit, they say, is never at a loss—Nor you neither? Speechless both——Why, you was merry enough before this lady came in.

Lou. I am sorry I have been any interruption to your happiness, sir.

Bel. Madam!

Char. Madam! Is that all you can say? But come, my dear girl, I won't tease you. Apropos, I must shew you what a present this dumb gentleman has made me: are not these handsome diamonds?

Lou. Yes, indeed, they seem very fine; but I am no judge of these things.

Char. Oh, you wicked little hypocrite! you are no judge of these things, Louisa; you have no diamonds! not you!

Lou. You know I have not, Miss Rusport: you know those things are infinitely above my reach.

Char. Ha, ha, ha!

Bel. She does tell a lie with an admirable countenance, that's true enough.

Lou. What ails you, Charlotte? What impertinence have I been guilty of, that you should find it necessary to humble me at such a rate? If you are happy, long may you be so; but, surely, it can be no addition to it to make me miserable.

Char. So serious! there must be some mystery in this——Mr Belcour, will you leave us together? You see I treat you with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance already.

Bel. Oh, by all means, pray command me.—Miss Rusport, I am your most obedient. By your condescension in accepting these poor trifles, I am

under eternal obligations to you—To you, Miss Dudley, I shall not offer a word on that subject: you despise finery, you have a soul above it; I adore your spirit; I was rather unprepared for meeting you here; but I shall hope for an opportunity of making myself better known to you.

[*Exit.*

Char. Louisa Dudley, you surprise me; I never saw you act thus before: cann't you bear a little innocent raillery before the man of your heart?

Lou. The man of my heart, madam? Be assured I never was so visionary to aspire to any man whom Miss Rusport honours with her choice.

Char. My choice, my dear! Why, we are playing at cross-purposes: how entered it into your head that Mr Belcour was the man of my choice?

Lou. Why, did not he present you with those diamonds?

Char. Well, perhaps he did——and, pray, Louisa, have you no diamonds?

Lou. I diamonds, truly! Who should give me diamonds?

Char. Who, but this very gentleman? Apropos, here comes your brother.

Enter CHARLES.

I insist upon referring our dispute to him: your sister and I, Charles, have a quarrel. Belcour, the hero of your letter, has just left us—somehow or other, Louisa's bright eyes have caught him; and the poor fellow's fallen desperately in love with her—(don't interrupt me, hussy)—Well, that's excusable enough, you'll say; but the jest of the story is, that this hair-brained spark, who does nothing like other people, has given her the very identical jewels which you pledged for me to Mr Stockwell; and will you believe, that this little demure slut made up a face, and squeezed out three or four hypocritical tears, because I rallied her about it?

Charles. I'm all astonishment! Louisa, tell me, without reserve, has Mr Belcour given you any diamonds?

Lou. None, upon my honour!

Charles. Has he made any professions to you?

Lou. He has; but altogether in a style so whimsical and capricious, that the best which can be said of them, is to tell you, that they seemed more the result of good spirits than good manners.

Char. Ay, ay, now the murder's out; he's in love with her, and she has no very great dislike to him; trust to my observation, Charles, for that: as to the diamonds, there's some mistake about them, and you must clear it up: three minutes conversation with him will put every thing in a right train; go, go, Charles; 'tis a brother's business; about it instantly; ten to one you'll find him over the way at Mr Stockwell's.

Charles. I confess I'm impatient to have the case cleared up. I'll take your advice, and find him out: good bye to you.

Char. Your servant; my life upon it you'll find Belcour a man of honour. Come, Louisa, let us adjourn to my dressing-room. I've a little private business to transact with you, before the old lady comes up to tea and interrupts us. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—FULMER'S *House.*

Enter FULMER *and Mrs* FULMER.

Ful. PATTY, was not Mr Belcour with you?

Mrs Ful. He was; and is now shut up in my chamber, in high expectation of an interview with Miss Dudley; she's at present with her brother, and 'twas with some difficulty I persuaded my hot-headed spark to wait till he has left her.

Ful. Well, child; and what then?

Mrs Ful. Why then, Mr Fulmer, I think it will be time for you and me to steal a march, and be gone.

Ful. So, this is all the fruit of your ingenious project? a shameful overthrow, or a sudden flight!

Mrs Ful. Why, my project was a mere impromptu, and can, at worst, but quicken our departure a few days; you know we had fairly outlived our credit here, and a trip to Boulogne is no ways unseasonable. Nay, never droop, man. Hark! hark! here's enough to bear charges.

[*Shewing a purse.*

Ful. Let me see, let me see! this weighs well; this is of the right sort: why your West Indian bled freely.

Mrs Ful. But that's not all: look here! Here are the sparklers! [*Shewing the jewels.*] Now, what d'ye think of my performances, eh? a foolish scheme, is not it—a silly woman?—

Ful. Thou art a Judith, a Joan of Arc, and I'll march under thy banners, girl, to the world's end. Come, let's begone; I've little to regret; my creditors may share the old books amongst them; they'll have occasion for philosophy to support their loss; they'll find enough upon my shelves: the world is my library; I read mankind—Now, Patty, lead the way.

Mrs Ful. Adieu, Belcour! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter CHARLES DUDLEY *and* LOUISA.

Cha. Well, Louisa, I confess the force of what you say: I accept Miss Rusport's bounty; and, when you see my generous Charlotte, tell her—but have a care! there is a selfishness even in gratitude, when it is too profuse: to be over-

thankful for any one favour, is in effect to lay out for another; the best return I could make my benefactress would be, never to see her more.

Lou. I understand you.

Cha. We that are poor, Louisa, should be cautious: for this reason, I would guard you against Belcour; at least, till I can unravel the mystery of Miss Rusport's diamonds. I was disappointed of finding him at Mr Stockwell's, and am now going in search of him again: he may intend honourably; but, I confess to you, I am staggered; think no more of him, therefore, for the present: of this be sure, while I have life, and you have honour, I will protect you, or perish in your defence. [*Exit* CHA.

Lou. Think of him no more! Well, I'll obey; but, if a wandering uninvited thought should creep by chance into my bosom, must I not give the harmless wretch a shelter? Oh! yes; the great artificer of the human heart knows every thread he wove into its fabric, nor puts his work to harder uses than it was made to bear: my wishes then, my guiltless ones I mean, are free: how fast they spring within me at that sentence! Down, down, ye busy creatures! Whither would you carry me? Ah! there is one amongst you, a forward new intruder, that, in the likeness of an offending, generous man, grows into favour with my heart. Fy, fy upon it! Belcour pursues, insults me; yet, such is the fatality of my condition, that what should rouse resentment, only calls up love.

Enter BELCOUR.

Bel. Alone, by all that's happy!

Lou. Ah!

Bel. Oh! shriek not, start not, stir not, loveliest creature! but let me kneel, and gaze upon your beauties!

Lou. Sir! Mr Belcour, rise! What is it you do?

Bel. See, I obey you; mould me as you will, behold your ready servant! New to your country, ignorant of your manners, habits, and desires, I put myself into your hands for instruction; make me only such as you can like yourself, and I shall be happy.

Lou. I must not hear this, Mr Belcour: go; should he, that parted from me but this minute, now return, I tremble for the consequence.

Bel. Fear nothing; let him come: I love you, madam; he'll find it hard to make me unsay that.

Lou. You terrify me! your impetuous temper frightens me; you know my situation; it is not generous to pursue me thus.

Bel. True; I do know your situation, your real one, Miss Dudley, and am resolved to snatch you from it: 'twill be a meritorious act. The old captain shall rejoice; Miss Rusport shall be made happy; and even he, even your beloved brother, with whose resentment you threaten me, shall, in the end, applaud and thank me. Come, thou art a dear, enchanting girl, and I'm determined not to live a minute longer without thee!

Lou. Hold! are you mad? I see you are a bold, assuming man, and know not where to stop.

Bel. Who, that beholds such beauty, can? By Heaven, you put my blood into a flame! Provoking girl! is it within the stretch of my fortune to content you? What is it you can further ask that I am not ready to grant?

Lou. Yes, with the same facility that you bestowed upon me Miss Rusport's diamonds. For shame! for shame! was that a manly story?

Bel. So! so! these devilish diamonds meet me every where—Let me perish if I meant you any harm. Oh! I could tear my tongue out for saying a word about the matter!

Lou. Go to her, then, and contradict it; till that is done, my reputation is at stake.

Bel. Her reputation! Now she has got upon that, she'll go on for ever.—What is there I will not do for your sake? I will go to Miss Rusport.

Lou. Do so; restore her own jewels to her, which, I suppose, you kept back for the purpose of presenting others to her of a greater value; but, for the future, Mr Belcour, when you would do a gallant action to that lady, don't let it be at my expence.

Bel. I see where she points: she is willing enough to give up Miss Rusport's diamonds, now she finds she shall be a gainer by the exchange. Be it so! 'tis what I wished!—[*Aside.*]—Well, madam, I will return Miss Rusport her own jewels, and you shall have others of tenfold their value.

Lou. No, sir; you err most widely; it is my good opinion, not my vanity, which you must bribe.

Bel. Why, what the devil would she have now?—Miss Dudley, it is my wish to obey and please you, but I have some apprehension that we mistake each other.

Lou. I think we do: tell me, then, in a few words, what is it you aim at?

Bel. In few words, then, and in plain honesty, I must tell you, so entirely am I captivated with you, that, had you but been such as it would have become me to have called my wife, I had been happy in knowing you by that name; as it is, you are welcome to partake my fortune: give me, in return, your person, give me pleasure, give me love; free, disencumbered, anti-matrimonial love!

Lou. Stand off! and let me never see you more!

Bel. Hold, hold, thou dear, tormenting tantalizing girl! Upon my knees, I swear you shall not stir till you've consented to my bliss!

Lou. Unhand me, sir: O Charles! protect me, rescue me, redress me! [*Exit* LOU.

Enter CHARLES DUDLEY.

Cha. How's this! Rise, villain, and defend yourself!

Bel. Villain!

Cha. The man who wrongs that lady is a villain!—Draw!

Bel. Never fear me, young gentleman! Brand me for a coward, if I baulk you!

Cha. Yet hold! Let me not be too hasty: your name, I think, is Belcour?

Bel. Well, sir?

Cha. How is it, Mr Belcour, you have done this mean, unmanly wrong; beneath the mask of

generosity, to give this fatal stab to our domestic peace? You might have had my thanks, my blessing; take my defiance now. 'Tis Dudley speaks to you; the brother, the protector of that injured lady.

Bel. The brother? Give yourself a truer title.

Cha What is it you mean?

Bel. Come, come, I know both her and you. I found you, sir, (but how, or why, I know not) in the good graces of Miss Rusport—(yes, colour at the name!) I gave you no disturbance there, never broke in upon you in that rich and plenteous quarter; but, when I could have blasted all your projects with a word, spared you, in foolish pity spared you, nor roused her from the fond credulity in which your artifice had lulled her.

Cha. No, sir, nor boasted to her of the splendid present you had made my poor Louisa—the diamonds, Mr Belcour! How was that? What can you plead to that arraignment?

Bel. You question me too late; the name of Belcour, and of villain, never met before; had you inquired of me before you uttered that rash word, you might have saved yourself or me a mortal error: now, sir, I neither give nor take an explanation; so, come on! [*They fight.*

Enter LOUISA, *and afterwards* O'FLAHERTY.

Lou. Hold, hold! for Heaven's sake, hold! Charles! Mr Belcour! Help! Sir, sir; make haste, they'll murder one another!

O'Fla. Hell and confusion! What's all this uproar for? Cann't you leave off cutting one another's throats, and mind what the poor girl says to you? You've done a notable thing, have not you both, to put her into such a flurry? I think o' my conscience, she's the most frighted of the three.

Cha. Dear Louisa, recollect yourself; why did you interfere? 'Tis in your cause.

Bel. Now could I kill him for caressing her!

O'Fla. O sir, your most obedient! You are the gentleman I had the honour of meeting here before; you was then running off at full speed like a Calmuck; now you are tilting and driving like a Bedlamite with this lad here, that seems as mad as yourself; 'tis pity but your country had a little more employment for you both.

Bel. Mr Dudley, when you've recovered the lady, you know where I am to be found.

[*Exit* BEL.

O'Fla. Well, then, cann't you stay where you are, and that will save the trouble of looking after you? Yon volatile fellow thinks to give a man the meeting by getting out of his way: by my soul, 'tis a roundabout method that of his! But, I think he called you Dudley. Hark'e, young man, are you the son of my friend, the old captain?

Cha. I am. Help me to convey this lady to her chamber, and I shall be more at leisure to answer your questions.

O'Fla. Ay, will I: come along, pretty one. If you've had wrong done you, young man, you need look no further for a second; Dennis O'Flaherty's your man for that: but never draw your sword before a woman, Dudley; damn it, never, while you live, draw your sword before a woman. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*Lady* RUSPORT'S *House.*

Enter Lady RUSPORT *and Servant.*

Ser. An elderly gentleman, who says his name is Varland, desires leave to wait on your ladyship.

Lady Rus. Shew him in; the very man I wish to see! Varland—he was Sir Oliver's solicitor, and privy to all his affairs. He brings some good tidings; some fresh mortgage, or another bond come to light; they start up every day.

Enter VARLAND.

Mr Varland, I'm glad to see you; you're heartily welcome, honest Mr Varland; you and I have not met since our late irreparable loss: how have you passed your time this age?

Var. Truly, my lady, ill enough: I thought I must have followed good Sir Oliver.

Lady Rus. Alack-a-day, poor man! Well, Mr Varland, you find me here overwhelmed with trouble and fatigue; torn to pieces with a multiplicity of affairs; a great fortune poured upon me, unsought for and unexpected: 'twas my good father's will and pleasure it should be so, and I must submit.

Var. Your ladyship inherits under a will made in the year forty-five, immediately after Captain Dudley's marriage with your sister.

Lady Rus. I do so, Mr Varland; I do so.

Var. I well remember it; I engrossed every syllable; but I am surprised to find your ladyship set so little store by this vast accession.

Lady Rus. Why, you know, Mr Varland, I am a moderate woman; I had enough before; a small matter satisfies me; and Sir Stephen Rusport (Heaven be his portion!) took care I should not want that.

Var. Very true: very true, he did so; and I am overjoyed at finding your ladyship in this disposition; for, truth to say, I was not without apprehension the news I have to communicate would have been of some prejudice to your ladyship's tranquillity.

Lady Rus. News, sir! What news have you for me?

Var. Nay, nothing to alarm you; a trifle, in your present way of thinking: I have a will of Sir Oliver's you have never seen.

Lady Rus. A will! Impossible! How came you by it, pray?

Var. I drew it up, at his command, in his last illness: it will save you a world of trouble; it gives his whole estate from you to his grandson, Charles Dudley.

Lady Rus. To Dudley! His estate to Charles Dudley! I cann't support it! I shall faint! You've killed me, you vile man! I shall never survive it!

Var. Look'e there, now! I protest I thought

you would have rejoiced at being clear of the encumbrance.

Lady Rus. 'Tis false; 'tis all a forgery, concerted between you and Dudley; why, else, did I never hear of it before?

Var. Have patience, my lady, and I'll tell you.—By Sir Oliver's direction, I was to deliver this will into no hands but his grandson, Dudley's: the young gentleman happened to be then in Scotland; I was dispatched thither in search of him: the hurry and fatigue of my journey brought on a fever by the way, which confined me in extreme danger for several days: upon my recovery, I pursued my journey, found young Dudley had left Scotland in the interim, and am now directed hither; where, as soon as I can find him, doubtless, I shall discharge my conscience, and fulfil my commission.

Lady Rus. Dudley, then, as yet, knows nothing of this will?

Var. Nothing; that secret rests with me.

Lady Rus. A thought occurs! by this fellow's talking of his conscience, I should guess it was upon sale.—[*Aside.*]—Come, Mr Varland, if 'tis as you say, I must submit. I was somewhat flurried at first, and forgot myself; I ask your pardon; this is no place to talk of business; step with me into my room; we will there compare the will, and resolve accordingly——Oh! would your fever had you, and I had your paper!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

Enter Miss RUSPORT, CHARLES, *and* O'FLAHERTY.

Char. So, so! My lady and her lawyer have retired to close confabulation; now, major, if you are the generous man I take you for, grant me one favour.

O'Fla. Faith will I, and not think much of my generosity neither; for though it may not be in my power to do the favour you ask, look you, it can never be in my heart to refuse it.

Charles. Could this man's tongue do justice to his thoughts, how eloquent would he be! [*Aside.*

Char. Plant yourself, then, in that room; keep guard for a few moments, upon the enemy's motions, in the chamber beyond; and, if they should attempt a sally, stop their march a moment, till your friend here can make good his retreat down the back-stairs.

O'Fla. A word to the wise! I'm an old campaigner; make the best use of your time; and trust me for tying the old cat up to the picket.

Char. Hush! hush! not so loud.

Charles. 'Tis the office of a centinel, major, you have undertaken, rather than that of a field-officer.

O'Fla. 'Tis the office of a friend, my dear boy; and, therefore, no disgrace to a general.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII.

Enter CHARLES *and* CHARLOTTE.

Char. Well, Charles, will you commit yourself to me for a few minutes?

Charles. Most readily; and let me, before one goes by, tender you the only payment I can ever make for your abundant generosity.

Char. Hold, hold! so vile a thing as money must not come between us. What shall I say? O Charles! O Dudley! What difficulties have you thrown upon me! Familiarly as we have lived, I shrink now at what I'm doing; and anxiously as I have sought this opportunity, my fears almost persuade me to abandon it.

Charles. You alarm me.

Char. Your looks and actions have been so distant, and, at this moment, are so deterring, that, was it not for the hope that delicacy, and not disgust inspires this conduct in you, I should sink with shame and apprehension; but time presses, and I must speak—and plainly too——Were you now in possession of your grandfather's estate; as justly you ought to be; and were you inclined to seek a companion for life, should you or should you not, in that case, honour your unworthy Charlotte with your choice?

Charles. My unworthy Charlotte! So judge me Heaven, there is not a circumstance on earth so valuable as your happiness, so dear to me as your person; but, to bring poverty, disgrace, reproach from friends, ridicule from all the world, upon a generous benefactress; thievishly to steal into an open, unreserved, ingenuous heart, O Charlotte! dear, unhappy girl, it is not to be done.

Char. Nay, now you rate too highly the poor advantages fortune alone has given me over you; how otherwise could we bring our merits to any balance! Come, my dear Charles, I have enough; make that enough still more, by sharing it with me: sole heiress of my father's fortune, a short time will put it in my disposal; in the mean while, you will be sent to join your regiment: let us prevent a separation, by setting out this very night for that happy country, where marriage still is free: carry me this moment to Belcour's lodgings.

Charles. Belcour's——The name is ominous! there's murder in it: bloody inexorable honour! [*Aside.*

Char. D'ye pause? Put me into his hands, while you provide the means for our escape: he is the most generous, the most honourable of men.

Charles. Honourable! most honourable!

Char. Can you doubt it? Do you demur? Have you forgot your letter? Why, Belcour 'twas that prompted me to this proposal, that promised to supply the means, that nobly offered his unasked assistance——

generosity, to give this fatal stab to our domestic peace? You might have had my thanks, my blessing; take my defiance now. 'Tis Dudley speaks to you; the brother, the protector of that injured lady.

Bel. The brother? Give yourself a truer title.

Cha What is it you mean?

Bel. Come, come, I know both her and you. I found you, sir, (but how, or why, I know not) in the good graces of Miss Rusport—(yes, colour at the name!) I gave you no disturbance there, never broke in upon you in that rich and plenteous quarter; but, when I could have blasted all your projects with a word, spared you, in foolish pity spared you, nor roused her from the fond credulity in which your artifice had lulled her.

Cha. No, sir, nor boasted to her of the splendid present you had made my poor Louisa—the diamonds, Mr Belcour! How was that? What can you plead to that arraignment?

Bel. You question me too late; the name of Belcour, and of villain, never met before; had you inquired of me before you uttered that rash word, you might have saved yourself or me a mortal error: now, sir, I neither give nor take an explanation; so, come on! [*They fight.*

Enter LOUISA, *and afterwards* O'FLAHERTY.

Lou. Hold, hold! for Heaven's sake, hold! Charles! Mr Belcour! Help! Sir, sir; make haste, they'll murder one another!

O'Fla. Hell and confusion! What's all this uproar for? Cann't you leave off cutting one another's throats, and mind what the poor girl says to you? You've done a notable thing, have not you both, to put her into such a flurry? I think o' my conscience, she's the most frighted of the three.

Cha. Dear Louisa, recollect yourself; why did you interfere? 'Tis in your cause.

Bel. Now could I kill him for caressing her!

O'Fla. O sir, your most obedient! You are the gentleman I had the honour of meeting here before; you was then running off at full speed like a Calmuck; now you are tilting and driving like a Bedlamite with this lad here, that seems as mad as yourself: 'tis pity but your country had a little more employment for you both.

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Enter O'FLAHERTY, *hastily.*

O'Fla. Run, run! for holy St Antony's sake, to horse and away! The conference is broke up, and the old lady advances upon a full Piedmontese trot, within pistol-shot of your encampment.

Char. Here, here! down the back-stairs! O Charles, remember me!

Charles. Farewell! Now, now I feel myself a coward. [*Exit.*

Char. What does he mean?

O'Fla. Ask no questions, but be gone: she has cooled the lad's courage, and wonders he feels like a coward. There's a damned deal of mischief brewing between this hyena and her lawyer: egad, I'll step behind this screen and listen: a good soldier must sometimes fight in ambush as well as open field. [*Retires.*

Enter LADY RUSPORT *and* VARLAND.

Lady Rus. Sure I heard somebody. Hark! No; only the servants going down the back-stairs. Well, Mr Varland, I think then we are agreed: you'll take my money; and your conscience no longer stands in your way.

Var. Your father was my benefactor; his will ought to be sacred; but, if I commit it to the flames, how will he be the wiser? Dudley, 'tis true, has done me no harm; but five thousand pounds will do me much good: so, in short, madam, I take your offer; I will confer with my clerk, who witnessed the will; and to-morrow morning put it into your hands, upon condition you put five thousand good pounds into mine.

Lady Rus. 'Tis a bargain: I'll be ready for you: farewell. [*Exit.*

Var. Let me consider—Five thousand pounds, prompt payment, for destroying this scrap of paper, not worth five farthings; 'tis a fortune easily earned; yes; and 'tis another man's fortune easily thrown away: 'tis a good round sum to be paid down at once for a bribe; but 'tis a damned rogue's trick in me to take it.

O'Fla. So, so! this fellow speaks truth to himself, though he lies to other people——But hush! [*Aside.*

Var. 'Tis breaking the trust of my benefactor; that's a foul crime! but he's dead, and can never reproach me with it: and 'tis robbing young Dudley of his lawful patrimony; that's a hard case: but he's alive, and knows nothing of the matter.

O'Fla. These lawyers are so used to bring off the rogueries of others, that they are never without an excuse for their own. [*Aside.*

Var. Were I assured now, that Dudley would give me half the money for producing this will, that Lady Rusport does for concealing it, I would deal with him, and be an honest man at half price. I wish every gentleman of my profession could lay his hand on his heart, and say the same thing.

O'Fla. A bargain, old gentleman! Nay, never start nor stare! you wasn't afraid of your own conscience, never be afraid of me.

Var. Of you, sir! who are you, pray?

O'Fla. I'll tell you who I am: you seem to wish to be honest, but want the heart to set about it. Now, I am the very man in the world to make you so; for, if you do not give me up that paper this very instant, by the soul of me, fellow, I will not leave one whole bone in your skin that sha'n't be broken.

Var. What right have you, pray, to take this paper from me?

O'Fla. What right have you, pray, to keep it from young Dudley? I don't know what it contains, but I am apt to think it will be safer in my hands than in yours; therefore, give it me without more words, and save yourself a beating: do now; you had best.

Var. Well, sir, I may as well make a grace of necessity. There! I have acquitted my conscience at the expence of five thousand pounds.

O'Fla. Five thousand pounds! Mercy upon me!—When there are such temptations in the law, can we wonder if some of the corps are a disgrace to it?

Var. Well, you have got the paper; if you are an honest man, give it to Charles Dudley.

O'Fla. An honest man! look at me, friend. I am a soldier; this is not the livery of a knave: I am an Irishman, honey; mine is not the country of dishonour. Now, sirrah, be gone; if you enter these doors, or give Lady Rusport the least item of what has passed, I will cut off both your ears, and rob the pillory of its due.

Var. I wish I was once fairly out of his sight [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII.—*A Room in* STOCKWELL'S *House.*

Enter STOCKWELL.

Stock. I must disclose myself to Belcour; this noble instance of his generosity, which old Dudley has been relating, allies me to him at once; concealment becomes too painful; I shall be proud to own him for my son——But see, he's here!

BELCOUR *enters, and throws himself upon a sofa.*

Bel. O my cursed tropical constitution! Would to Heaven I had been dropt upon the snows of Lapland, and never felt the blessed influence of the sun, so I had never burnt with these inflammatory passions!

Stock. So, so! you seem disordered, Mr Belcour?

Bel. Disordered, sir! Why did I ever quit the soil in which I grew? what evil planet drew me from that warm sunny region, where naked nature walks without disguise, into this cold, contriving, artificial country!

Stock. Come, sir, you've met a rascal—what of that? general conclusions are illiberal.

Bel. No, sir; I've met reflection by the way

I've come from folly, noise, and fury, and met a silent monitor—Well, well, a villain!—'twas not to be pardoned—pray never mind me, sir.

Stock. Alas, my heart bleeds for him!

Bel. And yet I might have heard him: now, plague upon that blundering Irishman for coming in as he did! the hurry of the deed might palliate the event: deliberate execution has less to plead.—Mr Stockwell, I am bad company to you.

Stock. Oh, sir, make no excuse. I think you have not found me forward to pry into the secrets of your pleasures and pursuits; 'tis not my disposition; but there are times, when want of curiosity would be want of friendship.

Bel. Ah, sir, mine is a case wherein you and I shall never think alike; the punctilious rules, by which I am bound, are not to be found in your ledgers, nor will pass current in the counting-house of a trader.

Stock. 'Tis very well, sir: if you think I can render you any service, it will be worth your trial to confide in me; if not, your secret is safer in your own bosom.

Bel. That sentiment demands my confidence: pray, sit down by me. You must know, I have an affair of honour on my hands with young Dudley; and, though I put up with no man's insult, yet I wish to take away no man's life.

Stock. I know the young man, and am apprised of your generosity to his father: what can have bred a quarrel between you?

Bel. A foolish passion on my side, and a haughty provocation on his. There is a girl, Mr Stockwell, whom I have unfortunately seen, of most uncommon beauty. She has, withal, an air of so much natural modesty, that had I not had good assurance of her being an attainable wanton, I declare I should as soon have thought of attempting the chastity of Diana.

Enter Servant.

Stock. Hey-day, do you interupt us?

Serv. Sir, there's an Irish gentleman will take no denial: he says he must see Mr Belcour directly, upon business of the last consequence.

Bel. Admit him: 'tis the Irish officer that parted us, and brings me young Dudley's challenge: I should have made a long story of it, and he'll tell you in three words.

Enter O'FLAHERTY.

O'Fla. Save you, my dear: and you, sir! I have a little bit of a word in private for you.

Bel. Pray deliver your commands: this gentleman is my intimate friend.

O'Fla. Why, then, Ensign Dudley will be glad to measure swords with you, yonder, at the London Tavern, in Bishopsgate-street, at nine o'clock—you know the place?

Bel. I do; and shall observe the appointment.

O'Fla. Will you be of the party, sir? We shall want a fourth hand.

Stock. Savage as the custom is, I close with your proposal; and, though I am not fully informed of the occasion of your quarrel, I shall rely on Mr Belcour's honour for the justice of it; and willingly stake my life in his defence.

O'Fla. Sir, you're a gentleman of honour, and I shall be glad of being better known to you—— But hark'e, Belcour, I had like to have forgot part of my errand: there is the money you gave old Dudley; you may tell it over, 'faith; 'tis a receipt in full: now the lad can put you to death with a safe conscience; and when he has done that job for you, let it be a warning how you attempt the sister of a man of honour.

Bel. The sister!

O'Fla. Ay, the sister; 'tis English, is it not? Or Irish; 'tis all one: you understand me? his sister, or Louisa Dudley, that's her name, I think, call her which you will. By St Patrick, 'tis a foolish piece of a business, Belcour, to go about to take away a poor girl's virtue from her, when there are so many to be met in this town, who have disposed of theirs to your hands. [*Exit.*

Stock. Why, I am thunderstruck! What is it you have done, and what is the shocking business in which I have engaged! If I understood him right, 'tis the sister of young Dudley you've been attempting: you talked to me of a professed wanton! the girl he speaks of has beauty enough indeed to inflame your desires, but she has honour, innocence, and simplicity, to awe the most licentious passion: if you have done that, Mr Belcour, I renounce you, I abandon you, I forswear all fellowship or friendship with you for ever.

Bel. Have patience for a moment: we do indeed speak of the same person—but she is not innocent; she is not young Dudley's sister.

Stock. Astonishing! Who told you this?

Bel. The woman where she lodges; the person who put me on the pursuit, and contrived our meetings.

Stock. What woman? what person?

Bel. Fulmer her name is: I warrant you I did not proceed without good grounds.

Stock. Fulmer! Fulmer!——Who waits?

Enter a Servant.

Send Mr Stukely hither directly. [*Exit Serv.*] I begin to see my way into this dark transaction. Mr Belcour, Mr Belcour! you are no match for the cunning and contrivances of this intriguing town.

Enter STUKELY.

Pr'ythee, Stukely, what is the name of the woman and her husband, who were stopt upon suspicion of selling stolen diamonds at our next-door neighbour's, the jeweller?

Stuke. Fulmer.

Stock. So!

Bel. Can you procure me a sight of those diamonds?

Stuke. They are now in my hand; I was desired to shew them to Mr Stockwell.

Stock. Give them to me: what do I see? As I live, the very diamonds Miss Rusport sent hither, and which I intrusted to you to return.

Bel. Yes, but I betrayed that trust, and gave them to Mrs Fulmer to present to Miss Dudley.

Stock. With a view, no doubt, to bribe her to compliance?

Bel. I own it.

Stock. For shame, for shame! and 'twas this woman's intelligence you relied upon for Miss Dudley's character?

Bel. I thought she knew her; by Heaven, I would have died sooner than have insulted a woman of virtue, or a man of honour!

Stock. I think you would: but mark the danger of licentious courses: you are betrayed, robbed, abused, and, but for this providential discovery, in a fair way of being sent out of the world with all your follies on your head———Dear Stukely, go to my neighbour, tell him I have an owner for the jewels, and beg him to carry the people under custody to the London Tavern, and wait for me there.—[*Exit* STUKELY.]—I fear the law does not provide a punishment to reach the villainy of these people; but how, in the name of wonder, could you take any thing on the word of such an informer?

Bel. Because I had not lived long enough in your country to know how few informers' words are to be taken: persuaded, however, as I was of Miss Dudley's guilt, I must own to you, I was staggered with the appearance of such innocence, especially when I saw her admitted into Miss Rusport's company.

Stock. Good Heaven! did you meet her at Miss Rusport's, and could you doubt of her being a woman of reputation?

Bel. By you, perhaps, such a mistake could not have been made; but in a perfect stranger, I hope, it is venial. I did not know what artifices young Dudley might have used to conceal her character; I did not know what disgrace attended the detection of it.

Stock. I see it was a trap laid for you, which you have narrowly escaped; you addressed a woman of honour with all the loose incense of a profane admirer, and you have drawn upon you the resentment of a man of honour, who thinks himself bound to protect her.——Well, sir, you must atone for this mistake.

Bel. To the lady, the most penitent submission I can make is justly due; but, in the execution of an act of justice, it shall never be said my soul was swayed by the least particle of fear: I have received a challenge from her brother; now, though I would give my fortune, almost my life itself, to purchase her happiness, yet I cannot abate her one scruple of my honour; I have been branded with the name of villain.

Stock. Ay, sir, you mistook her character, and he mistook yours; error begets error.

Bel. Villain, Mr Stockwell, is a harsh word.

Stock. It is a harsh word, and should be unsaid.

Bel. Come, come; it shall be unsaid.

Stock. Or else what follows? Why, the sword is drawn, and, to heal the wrongs you have done to the reputation of the sister, you make an honourable amends, by murdering the brother.

Bel. Murdering!

Stock. 'Tis thus religion writes and speaks the word; in the vocabulary of modern honour there is no such term—But come, I don't despair of satisfying the one, without alarming the other; that done, I have a discovery to unfold, that you will then, I hope, be fitted to receive. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The London Tavern.*

Enter O'FLAHERTY, STOCKWELL, CHARLES, *and* BELCOUR.

O'Fla. Gentlemen, well met! you understand each other's minds; and, as I see you have brought nothing but your swords, you may set to without any further ceremony.

Stock. You will not find us backward in any worthy cause; but, before we proceed any further, I would ask this young gentleman, whether he has any explanation to require of Mr Belcour.

Charles. Of Mr Belcour none; his actions speak for themselves: but to you, sir, I would fain propose one question.

Stock. Name it.

Charles. How is it, Mr Stockwell, that I meet a man of your character on this ground?

Stock. I will answer you directly, and my answer shall not displease you. I come hither in defence of the reputation of Miss Dudley, to redress the injuries of an innocent young lady.

O'Fla. By my soul, the man knows he's to fight, only he mistakes which side he's to be of.

Stock. You are about to draw your sword to refute a charge against your sister's honour; you would do well, if there were no better means within reach: but the proofs of her innocence are lodged in our bosoms, and if we fall, you destroy the evidence that most effectually can clear her fame.

Charles. How's that, sir?

Stock. This gentleman could best explain it to you, but you have given him an undeserved name that seals his lips against you: I am not under the same inhibition; and, if your anger can keep cool for a few minutes, I desire I may call in two witnesses, who will solve all difficulties at once. Here, waiter! bring those people in that are without.

O'Fla. Out upon it, what need is there for so

much talking about the matter? can't you settle your differences first, and dispute about them afterwards?

FULMER *and Mrs* FULMER *brought in.*

Charles. Fulmer and his wife in custody?

Stock. Yes, sir; these are your honest landlord and landlady, now in custody for defrauding this gentleman of certain diamonds intended to have been presented to your sister.—Be so good, Mrs Fulmer, to inform the company why you so grossly scandalized the reputation of an innocent lady, by persuading Mr Belcour, that Miss Dudley was not the sister, but the mistress, of this gentleman.

Mrs Ful. Sir, I don't know what right you have to question me, and I shall not answer till I see occasion.

Stock. Had you been as silent heretofore, madam, it would have saved you some trouble; but we don't want your confession. This letter, which you wrote to Mr Belcour, will explain your design; and these diamonds, which, of right, belong to Miss Rusport, will confirm your guilt: the law, Mrs Fulmer, will make you speak, though I cann't. Constable, take charge of your prisoners.

Ful. Hold a moment! Mr Stockwell, you are a gentleman that knows the world, and a member of parliament; we shall not attempt to impose upon you; we know we are open to the law, and we know the utmost it can do against us. Mr Belcour has been ill used, to be sure, and so has Miss Dudley; and for my own part, I always condemned the plot, as a very foolish plot; but it was a child of Mrs Fulmer's brain, and she would not be put out of conceit with it.

Mrs Ful. You are a very foolish man, Mr Fulmer; so, pr'ythee, hold your tongue.

Ful. Therefore, as I was saying, if you send her to Bridewell, it won't be amiss; and if you give her a little wholesome discipline, she may be the better for that too: but for me, Mr Stockwell, who am a man of letters, I must beseech you, sir, not to bring any disgrace upon my profession.

Stock. 'Tis you, Mr Fulmer, not I, that disgrace your profession; therefore be gone, nor expect that I will betray the interests of mankind so far as to shew favour to such incendiaries. Take them away; I blush to think such wretches should have the power to set two honest men at variance. [*Exeunt* FULMER, *&c.*

Charles. Mr Belcour, we have mistaken each other; let us exchange forgiveness. I am convinced you intended no affront to my sister, and ask your pardon for the expression I was betrayed into.

Bel. 'Tis enough, sir; the error began on my side, and was Miss Dudley here, I would be the first to atone.

Stock. Let us all adjourn to my house, and conclude the evening like friends: you will find a little entertainment ready for you; and if I am not mistaken, Miss Dudley and her father will make part of our company. Come, major, do you consent?

O'Fla. Most readily, Mr Stockwell; a quarrel well made up, is better than a victory hardly earned. Give me your hand, Belcour; o' my conscience, you are too honest for the country you live in. And now, my dear lad, since peace is concluded on all sides, I have a discovery to make to you, which you must find out for yourself; for deuce take me if I rightly comprehend it, only that your aunt Rusport is in a conspiracy against you, and a vile rogue of a lawyer, whose name I forget, at the bottom of it.

Cha. What conspiracy? Dear major, recollect yourself.

O'Fla. By my soul, I've no faculty at recollecting myself; but I've a paper somewhere about me, that will tell you more of the matter than I can. When I get to the merchant's, I will endeavour to find it.

Charles. Well, it must be in your own way; but I confess you have thoroughly roused my curiosity. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—STOCKWELL'S *House.*

Enter Captain DUDLEY, LOUISA, *and* STUKELY.

Dud. And are those wretches, Fulmer and his wife, in safe custody?

Stuke. They are in good hands; I accompanied them to the tavern, where your son was to be, and then went in search of you. You may be sure Mr Stockwell will enforce the law against them as far as it will go.

Dud. What mischief might their cursed machinations have produced, but for this timely discovery!

Lou. Still I am terrified!—I tremble with apprehension lest Mr Belcour's impetuosity, and Charles's spirit, should not wait for an explanation, but drive them both to extremes, before the mistake can be unravelled.

Stuke. Mr Stockwell is with them, madam, and you have nothing to fear—you cannot suppose he would ask you hither for any other purpose but to celebrate their reconciliation, and to receive Mr Belcour's atonement.

Dud. No, no, Louisa. Mr Stockwell's honour and discretion guard us against all danger or offence—he well knows we will endure no imputation on the honour of our family, and he certainly has invited us to receive satisfaction on that score in an amicable way.

Lou. Would to Heaven they were returned!

Stuke. You may expect them every minute; and see, madam, agreeable to your wish, they are here. [*Exit* STUKE.

Enter CHARLES, *and afterwards* STOCKWELL *and* O'FLAHERTY.

Lou. O Charles! O brother! how could you serve me so? how could you tell me you was going to Lady Rusport's, and then set out with a design of fighting Mr Belcour? But where is he? Where is your antagonist?

Stock. Captain, I am proud to see you; and you, Miss Dudley, do me particular honour. We have been adjusting, sir, a very extraordinary and dangerous mistake, which I take for granted, my friend Stukely has explained to you.

Dud. He has. I have too good an opinion of Mr Belcour to believe he could be guilty of a designed affront to an innocent girl; and I am much too well acquainted with your character, to suppose you could abet him in such design; I have no doubt, therefore, all things will be set to rights in very few words, when we have the pleasure of seeing Mr Belcour.

Stock. He has only stept into the counting-house, and will wait upon you directly. You will not be over strict, madam, in weighing Mr Belcour's conduct to the minutest scruple. His manners, passions, and opinions, are not, as yet, assimilated to this climate; he comes amongst you a new character, an inhabitant of a new world; and both hospitality, as well as pity, recommend him to our indulgence.

Enter BELCOUR, *who bows to* *Miss* DUDLEY.

Bel. I am happy, and ashamed, to see you—no man in his senses would offend you—I forfeited mine, and erred against the light of the sun, when I overlooked your virtues—but your beauty was predominant, and hid them from my sight—I now perceive I was the dupe of a most improbable report, and humbly entreat your pardon.

Lou. Think no more of it; 'twas a mistake.

Bel. My life has been composed of little else; 'twas founded in mystery, and has continued in error: I was once given to hope, Mr Stockwell, that you was to have delivered me from these difficulties; but, either I do not deserve your confidence, or I was deceived in my expectations.

Stock. When this lady has confirmed your pardon, I shall hold you deserving of my confidence.

Lou. That was granted the moment it was asked.

Bel. To prove my title to his confidence, honour me so far with yours, as to allow me a few minutes conversation in private with you.

[*She turns to her father.*

Dud. By all means, Louisa; come, Mr Stockwell, let us go into another room.

Cha. And now, Major O'Flaherty, I claim your promise of a sight of the paper, that is to unravel this conspiracy of my aunt Rusport's: I think I have waited with great patience.

O'Fla. I have been endeavouring to call to mind what it was I overheard—I've got the paper, and will give you the best account I can of the whole transaction. [*Exeunt.*

Manent BELCOUR *and* LOUISA.

Bel. Miss Dudley, I have solicited this audience, to repeat to you my penitence and confusion. How shall I atone? What reparation can I make to you and virtue?

Lou. To me there's nothing due, nor any thing demanded of you, but your more favourable opinion for the future, if you should chance to think of me. Upon the part of virtue, I'm not empowered to speak; but if, hereafter, as you range through life, you should surprise her in the person of some wretched female, poor as myself, and not so well protected, enforce not your advantage, complete not your licentious triumph, but raise her, rescue her from shame and sorrow, and reconcile her to herself again.

Bel. I will, I will: by bearing your idea ever present in my thoughts, virtue shall keep an advocate within me. But tell me, loveliest, when you pardon the offence, can you, all perfect as you are, approve of the offender? As I now cease to view you in that false light I lately did, can you, and in the fulness of your bounty, will you, cease also to reflect upon the libertine addresses I have paid you, and look upon me as your reformed, your rational admirer?

Lou. Are sudden reformations apt to last? and how can I be sure the first fair face you meet will not ensnare affections so unsteady, and that I shall not lose you lightly as I gained you?

Bel. Because, though you conquered me by surprise, I have no inclination to rebel; because, since the first moment that I saw you, every instant has improved you in my eyes; because, by principle as well as passion, I am unalterably yours: in short, there are ten thousand causes for my love to you:—would to Heaven I could plant one in your soft bosom, that might move you to return it!

Lou. Nay, Mr Belcour——

Bel. I know I am not worthy your regard. I know I'm tainted with a thousand faults, sick of a thousand follies; but there's a healing virtue in your eyes that makes recovery certain. I cannot be a villain in your arms.

Lou. That you can never be: whomever you shall honour with your choice, my life upon't that woman will be happy: it is not from suspicion that I hesitate, it is from honour: 'tis the severity of my condition: it is the world, that never will interpret fairly in our case.

Bel. Oh, what am I? and who in this wide world concerns himself for such a nameless, such a friendless thing as I am? I see, Miss Dudley, I've not yet obtained your pardon.

Lou. Nay, that you are in full possession of.

Bel. Oh, seal it with your hand then, loveliest of women; confirm it with your heart; make me honourably happy, and crown your penitent, not with your pardon only, but your love.

Lou. My love!——

Bel. By Heaven, my soul is conquered with your virtues, more than my eyes are ravished with your beauty! Oh, may this soft, this sensitive alarm, be happy, be auspicious! Doubt not, deliberate not, delay not. If happiness be the end of life, why do we slip a moment?

Enter O'FLAHERTY, *and afterwards* DUDLEY, *and* CHARLES, *with* STOCKWELL.

O'Fla. Joy, joy, joy! Sing, dance, leap, laugh

for joy! Ha' done making love, and fall down on your knees to every saint in the kalendar; for they're all on your side, and honest St Patrick at the head of them.

Cha. O Louisa, such an event! By the luckiest chance in life, we have discovered a will of my grandfather's, made in his last illness, by which he cuts off my aunt Rusport with a small annuity, and leaves me heir to his whole estate, with a fortune of fifteen thousand pounds to yourself.

Lou. What is it you tell me? O, sir, instruct me to support this unexpected turn of fortune.

[*To her father.*

Dud. Name not fortune; 'tis the work of Providence——'tis the justice of Heaven, that would not suffer innocence to be oppressed, nor your base aunt to prosper in her cruelty and cunning.

[*A servant whispers* BELCOUR, *and he goes out.*

O'Fla. You shall pardon me, Captain Dudley, but you must not overlook St Patrick neither;—for, by my soul, if he had not put it into my head to slip behind the screen when your righteous aunt and the lawyer were plotting together, I don't see how you would ever have come at the paper there, that Mr Stockwell is reading.

Dud. True, my good friend; you are the father of this discovery; but how did you contrive to get this will from the lawyer?

O'Fla. By force, my dear—the only way of getting any thing from a lawyer's clutches.

Stock. Well, major, when he brings his action of assault and battery against you, the least Dudley can do is, to defend you with the weapons you have put into his hands.

Cha. That I am bound to do; and after the happiness I shall have in sheltering a father's age from the vicissitudes of life, my next delight will be in offering you an asylum in the bosom of your country.

O'Fla. And upon my soul, my dear, 'tis high time I was there; for 'tis now thirty long years since I set foot in my native country—and, by the power of St Patrick, I swear, I think it's worth all the rest of the world put together.

Dud. Ay, major, much about that time have I been beating the round of service, and 'twere well for us both to give over: we have stood many a tough gale, and abundance of hard blows; but Charles shall lay us up in a little private, but safe, harbour, where we'll rest from our labours, and peacefully wind up the remainder of our days.

O'Fla. Agreed; and you may take it as a proof of my esteem, young man, Major O'Flaherty accepts a favour at your hands——for, by Heaven, I'd sooner starve than say, 'I thank you' to the man I despise. But I believe you are an honest lad, and I am glad you have trounced the old cat—for, on my conscience, I believe I must otherwise have married her myself, to have let you in for a share of her fortune.

Stock. Hey-day, what's become of Belcour?

Lou. One of your servants called him out just now, and seemingly on some earnest occasion.

Stock. I hope, Miss Dudley, he has atoned to you as a gentleman ought?

Lou. Mr Belcour, sir, will always do what a gentleman ought—and, in my case, I fear only you will think he has done too much.

Stock. What has he done? and what can be too much? Pray, Heaven, it may be as I wish!

[*Aside.*

Dud. Let us hear it, child.

Lou. With confusion for my own unworthiness, I confess to you he has offered me——

Stock. Himself?

Lou. 'Tis true.

Stock. Then, I am happy: all my doubts, my cares are over, and I may own him for my son. Why, these are joyful tidings: come, my good friend, assist me in disposing your lovely daughter to accept this returning prodigal: he is no unprincipled, no hardened libertine; his love for you and virtue is the same.

Dud. 'Twere vile ingratitude in me to doubt his merit—What says my child?

O'Fla. Begging your pardon now, 'tis a frivolous sort of a question, that of yours; for you may see plainly enough, by the young lady's looks, that she says a great deal, though she speaks never a word.

Cha. Well, sister, I believe the major has fairly interpreted the state of your heart.

Lou. I own it: and what must that heart be, which love, honour, and benevolence, like Mr Belcour's, can make no impression on?

Stock. I thank you. What happiness has this hour brought to pass!

O'Fla. Why don't we all sit down to supper, then, and make a night on't?

Stock. Hold, here comes Belcour.

BELCOUR, *introducing Miss* RUSPORT.

Bel. Mr Dudley, here is a fair refugee, who properly comes under your protection: she is equipt for Scotland; but your good fortune, which I have related to her, seems inclined to save you both the journey——Nay, madam, never go back; you are amongst friends.

Charles. Charlotte!

Char. The same; that fond officious girl, that haunts you every where; that persecuting spirit——

Charles. Say rather, that protecting angel: such you have been to me.

Char. O, Charles! you have an honest, but proud heart.

Charles. Nay, chide me not, dear Charlotte.

Bel. Seal up her lips then; she is an adorable girl; her arms are open to you; and love and happiness are ready to receive you.

Charles. Thus, then, I claim my dear, my destined wife. [*Embracing her.*

Enter Lady RUSPORT.

Lady Rus. Hey-day! mighty fine! wife, truly! mighty well! kissing, embracing——did ever any thing equal this? Why, you shameless hussy! But I won't condescend to waste a word upon you.

You, sir, you, Mr Stockwell, you fine, sanctified, fair-dealing man of conscience, is this the principle you trade upon? Is this your neighbourly system, to keep a house of reception for run-away daughters, and young beggarly fortune-hunters?

O'Fla. Be advised now, and don't put yourself in such a passion; we were all very happy till you came.

Lady Rus. Stand away, sir! have not I a reason to be in a passion?

O'Fla. Indeed, honey, and you have, if you knew all.

Lady Rus. Come, madam, I have found out your haunts; dispose yourself to return home with me. Young man, let me never see you within my doors again. Mr Stockwell, I shall report your behaviour, depend upon it.

Stock. Hold, madam; I cannot consent to lose Miss Rusport's company this evening, and I am persuaded you won't insist upon it: 'tis an unmotherly action to interrupt your daughter's happiness in this manner; believe me it is.

Lady Rus. Her happiness, truly! upon my word! and I suppose 'tis an unmotherly action to interrupt her ruin; for what but ruin must it be to marry a beggar! I think my sister had a proof of that, sir, when she made choice of you.

[*To Capt.* DUDLEY.

Dud. Don't be too lavish of your spirits, Lady Rusport.

O'Fla. By my soul, you'll have occasion for a sip of the cordial elixir, by and by.

Stock. It don't appear to me, madam, that Mr Dudley can be called a beggar.

Lady Rus. But it appears to me, Mr Stockwell—I am apt to think a pair of colours cannot furnish settlement quite sufficient for the heiress of Sir Stephen Rusport.

Char. But a good estate, in aid of a commission, may do something.

Lady Rus. A good estate, truly! where should he get a good estate, pray?

Stock. Why, suppose now a worthy old gentleman, on his death-bed, should have taken it in mind to leave him one——

Lady Rus. Ha! what's that you say?

O'Fla. O ho! you begin to smell a plot, do you?

Stock. Suppose there should be a paper in the world that runs thus——"I do hereby give and bequeath all my estates, real and personal, to Charles Dudley, son of my late daughter, Louisa," &c. &c. &c.

Lady Rus. Why, I am thunderstruck! By what contrivance, what villainy, did you get possession of that paper?

Stock. There was no villainy, madam, in getting possession of it: the crime was in concealing it; none in bringing it to light.

Lady Rus. Oh, that cursed lawyer, Varland!

O'Fla. You may say that, faith! he is a cursed lawyer, and a cursed piece of work I had to get the paper from him. Your ladyship now was to have paid him five thousand pounds for it—I forced him to give it me of his own accord, for nothing at all, at all.

Lady Rus. Is it you that have done this? Am I foiled by your blundering contrivances, after all?

O'Fla. 'Twas a blunder, faith, but as natural a one as if I had made it o' purpose.

Charles. Come, let us not oppress the fallen; do right even now, and you shall have no cause to complain.

Lady Rus. Am I become an object of your pity, then? Insufferable! Confusion light amongst you! Marry and be wretched: let me never see you more. [*Exit.*

Char. She is outrageous; I suffer for her, and blush to see her thus exposed.

Charles. Come, Charlotte, don't let this angry woman disturb our happiness: we will save her in spite of herself; your father's memory shall not be stained by the discredit of his second choice.

Char. I trust implicitly to your discretion, and am in all things yours.

Bel. Now, lovely, but obdurate, does not this example soften?

Lou. What can you ask for more? Accept my hand, accept my willing heart.

Bel. O, bliss unutterable! brother, father, friend, and you, the author of this general joy—

O'Fla. Blessings of St Patrick upon us all! 'Tis a night of wonderful and surprising ups and downs: I wish we were all fairly set down to supper, and there was an end on't.

Stock. Hold for a moment! I have yet one word to interpose——Entitled, by my friendship, to a voice in your disposal, I have approved your match: there yet remains a father's consent to be obtained.

Bel. Have I a father?

Stock. You have a father: did not I tell you I had a discovery to make? Compose yourself: you have a father, who observes, who knows, who loves you.

Bel. Keep me no longer in suspense! my heart is softened for the affecting discovery, and nature fits me to receive his blessing.

Stock. I am your father.

Bel. My father! Do I live?

Stock. I am your father.

Bel. It is too much; my happiness overpowers me: to gain a friend, and find a father, is too much: I blush to think how little I deserve you.

[*They embrace.*

Dud. See, children, how many new relations spring from this night's unforeseen events, to endear us to each other.

O'Fla. O' my conscience, I think we shall be all related by and by.

Stock. How happily has this evening concluded, and yet how threatening was its approach! Let us repair to the supper-room, where I will unfold to you every circumstance of my mysterious story. Yes, Belcour, I have watched you with a patient, but inquiring eye; and I have discovered, through the veil of some irregularities, a heart beaming with benevolence, an animated nature,

fallible, indeed, but not incorrigible; and your election of this excellent young lady makes me glory in acknowledging you to be my son.

Bel. I thank you—and, in my turn, glory in the father I have gained: sensibly impress'd with gratitude for such extraordinary dispensations, I beseech you, amiable Louisa, for the time to come, whenever you perceive me deviating into error or offence, bring only to my mind the Providence of this night, and I will turn to reason, and obey.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY DAVID GARRICK, ESQ.

SPOKEN BY MRS ABINGTON.

CONFESS, good folks, has not Miss Rusport shewn
Strange whims for SEVENTEEN HUNDRED SEVENTY-ONE?
What, pawn her jewels—There's a precious plan!—
To extricate from want a brave *old* man;
And fall in love with poverty and honour—
A girl of fortune, fashion?———Fie upon her.
But do not think we females of the stage
So dead to the refinements of the age,
That we agree with our old-fashion'd poet:
I am point blank against him, and I'll shew it:
And that my tongue may more politely run,
Make me a lady——Lady Blabington.
Now, with a rank and title to be free,
I'll make a catechism——and you shall see
What is the *veritable beaume de vie:*
As I change place I stand for that, or this——
My lady questions first——then answers miss.

[*She speaks as my Lady.*]

"Come, tell me, child, what were our modes and dress,
In those strange times of that old fright, Queen Bess?"——
And now for miss———

[*She changes place, and speaks for Miss.*]

When Bess was England's queen,
Ladies were dismal beings, seldom seen;
They rose betimes, and breakfasted as soon
On beef and beer—then studied Greek till noon:
Unpainted cheeks with blush of health did glow,
Beruffed and fardingaled from top to toe,
Nor necks, nor ancles, would they ever shew.
Learnt Greek!—[*Laughs.*]—Our outside head takes half a day;
Have we much time to dress the *inside*, pray?
No heads dress'd *à la Greque;* the ancients quote,
There may be learning in a *papillote:*
Cards are *our* classics; and I, Lady B,
In learning will not yield to any she
Of the late-founded *female* university.
But now for Lady Blab——

[*Speaks as my Lady.*]

"Tell me, Miss Nancy,
What sports and what employments did they fancy?"——

[*Speaks as Miss.*]

The vulgar creatures seldom left their houses,
But taught their children, work'd, and loved their spouses;
The use of cards at Christmas only knew,
They play'd for little, and their games were few,
One-and-thirty, Put, All-fours, and Lantera-loo.
They bore a race of mortals stout and boney,
And never heard the name of Macaroni.

[*Speaks as my Lady.*]

"O brava, brava! that's my pretty dear!
Now let a modern, modish fair appear;
No more of these old dowdy maids and wives,
Tell how superior beings pass their lives."

[*Speaks as Miss.*]

Till noon they sleep, from noon till night they dress,
From night till morn they game it more or less,

Next night the same sweet course of joy run o'er,
Then the night after as the night before,
And the night after that, encore, encore!——

[*She comes forward.*]

Thus with our cards we *shuffle* off all sorrow,
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow!
We *deal apace*, from youth unto our prime,
To the last moment of our *tabby* time;
And all our yesterdays, from rout and drum,
Have lighted fools with empty pockets home.
Thus do our lives with rapture roll away,
Not with the nonsense of our author's play;
This is true life—true spirit—give it praise;
Don't snarl and sigh for good Queen Bess's days.
For all you look so sour, and bend the brow,
You all rejoice with me, you're living now,

THE

RIVALS.

BY

SHERIDAN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Sir ANTHONY ABSOLUTE.
Captain ABSOLUTE, *his Son, attached to Lydia Languish.*
FAULKLAND, *attached to Julia.*
ACRES, *a Country Squire.*
Sir LUCIUS O'TRIGGER, *an Irishman.*
FAG, *Servant to Captain Absolute.*
DAVID, *Servant to Acres.*
Coachman to Sir Anthony Absolute.

WOMEN.

Mrs MALAPROP, *attached to Sir Lucius O'Trigger.*
LYDIA LANGUISH, *Niece to Mrs Malaprop.*
JULIA, *attached to Faulkland.*
LUCY, *Maid to Miss Languish.*
Maid, Boy, Servants, &c.

SCENE,—*Bath.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Street in Bath.*

Coachman crosses the Stage—Enter FAG, *looking after him.*

Fag. What! Thomas! Sure 'tis he?—What! Thomas! Thomas!

Coach. Hey! Odd's life! Mr Fag! give us your hand, my old fellow-servant.

Fag. Excuse my glove, Thomas!—I'm devilish glad to see you, my lad; why, my prince of charioteers, you look as hearty!—But who the deuce thought of seeing you in Bath!

Coach. Sure, master, Madam Julia, Harry, Mrs Kate, and the postillion, be all come.

Fag. Indeed!

Coach. Ay! Master thought another fit of the gout was coming to make him a visit; so he'd a mind to gi't the slip, and whip! we were all off at an hour's warning.

Fag. Ay, ay! hasty in every thing, or it would not be Sir Anthony Absolute.

Coach. But tell us, Mr Fag, how does young master? Odd! Sir Anthony will stare to see the captain here!

Fag. I do not serve Captain Absolute now.

Coach. Why, sure!

Fag. At present I am employed by Ensign Beverley.

Coach. I doubt, Mr Fag, you ha'n't changed for the better.

Fag. I have not changed, Thomas.

Coach. No! why, didn't you say you had left young master!

Fag. No. Well, honest Thomas, I must puzzle you no farther—briefly then—Captain Absolute and Ensign Beverley are one and the same person.

Coach. The devil they are!

Fag. So it is indeed, Thomas; and the ensign-half of my master being on guard at present—the captain has nothing to do with me.

Coach. So, so! what, this is some freak, I warrant! Do tell us, Mr Fag, the meaning o't—you know I ha' trusted you.

Fag. You'll be secret, Thomas?

Coach. As a coach horse.

Fag. Why, then, the cause of all this is—love—love, Thomas, who (as you may get read to you) has been a masquerader ever since the days of Jupiter.

Coach. Ay, ay; I guessed there was a lady in the case: but pray, why does your master pass only for ensign? now, if he had shammed general, indeed———

Fag. Ah! Thomas, there lies the mystery of the matter. Hark'e, Thomas; my master is in love with a lady of a very singular taste;—a lady, who likes him better as a half-pay ensign, than if she knew he was son and heir to Sir Anthony Absolute, a baronet of three thousand a-year.

Coach. That is an odd taste indeed!—but has she got the stuff, Mr Fag? is she rich, hey?

Fag. Rich! why, I believe she owns half the stocks! Zounds! Thomas, she could pay the national debt as easily as I could my washer-woman! She has a lap-dog that eats out of gold; she feeds her parrot with small pearls; and all her thread-papers are made of bank-notes!

Coach. Bravo! faith! Odd! I warrant she has a set of thousands at least; but does she draw kindly with the captain?

Fag. As fond as pigeons.

Coach. May one hear her name?

Fag. Miss Lydia Languish. But there is an old tough aunt in the way; though, by the by, she has never seen my master; for he got acquainted with miss while on a visit in Gloucestershire.

Coach. Well, I wish they were once harnessed together in matrimony. But pray, Mr Fag, what kind of a place is this Bath? I ha' heard a deal of it; here's a mort o' merry-making—hey?

Fag. Pretty well, Thomas, pretty well; 'tis a good lounge. In the morning we go to the pump-room, (though neither my master nor I drink the waters;) after breakfast, we saunter on the parades, or play a game at billiards; at night we dance; but damn the place, I'm tired of it; their regular hours stupify me! not a fiddle nor a card after eleven! however, Mr Faulkland's gentleman and I keep it up a little in private parties. I'll introduce you there, Thomas; you'll like him much.

Coach. Sure I know Mr Du-Peign; you know his master is to marry Madam Julia.

Fag. I had forgot. But, Thomas, you must polish a little; indeed you must——Here, now, this wig! what the devil do you do with a wig, Thomas? none of the London whips, of any degree of ton, wear wigs now.

Coach. More's the pity! more's the pity, I say! Odd's life? when I heard how the lawyers and doctors had took to their own hair, I thought how 'twould go next. Odd rabbit it! when the fashion had got foot on the bar, I guessed 'twould mount to the box! but 'tis all out of character, believe me, Mr Fag; and look'e, I'll never gi' up mine; the lawyers and doctors may do as they will.

Fag. Well, Thomas, we'll not quarrel about that.

Coach. Why, bless you, the gentlemen of they professions ben't all of a mind; for, in our village now, thof Jack Gauge, the exciseman, has ta'en to his carrots, there's little Dick, the farrier, swears he'll never forsake his bob, though all the college should appear with their own heads!

Fag. Indeed! well said, Dick! but hold—mark! mark! Thomas.

Coach. Zooks! 'tis the captain! Is that the lady with him?

Fag. No, no! that is Madam Lucy, my master's mistress's maid. They lodge at that house. But I must after him, to tell him the news.

Coach. Odd! he's giving her money! Well, Mr Fag——

Fag. Good by, Thomas! I have an appointment in Gyde's Porch this evening at eight; meet me there, and we'll make a little party.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—*A Dressing-Room in Mrs* MALAPROP'S *Lodgings.*

LYDIA *sitting on a Sofa, with a Book in her hand.*

Enter LUCY, *as just returned from a message.*

Lucy. Indeed, ma'am, I traversed half the town in search of it; I don't believe there's a circulating library in Bath I ha'n't been at.

Lydia. And could not you get 'The Reward of Constancy?'

Lucy. No, indeed, ma'am.

Lydia. Nor 'The Fatal Connection?'

Lucy. No, indeed, ma'am.

Lydia. Nor 'The Mistakes of the Heart?'

Lucy. Ma'am, as ill luck would have it, Mr Bull said Miss Sukey Saunter had just fetched it away.

Lydia. Heigh-ho!—Did you inquire for 'The Delicate Distress?'

Lucy.——Or, 'The Memoirs of Lady Woodford?' Yes, indeed, ma'am. I asked every where for it; and I might have brought it from Mr Frederick's; but Lady Slattern Lounger, who had just sent it home, had so soiled and dog's-eared it, it wa'n't fit for a Christian to read.

Lydia. Heigh-ho!—Yes, I always know when

Lady Slattern has been before me. She has a most observing thumb; and, I believe, cherishes her nails for the convenience of making marginal notes. Well, child, what have you brought me?

Lucy. Oh! here, ma'am.

[*Taking books from under her cloak, and from her pockets.*

This is 'The Gordian Knot,' and this 'Peregrine Pickle.' Here are 'The Tears of Sensibility,' and 'Humphrey Clinker.' This is 'The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality, written by herself;' and here the second volume of 'The Sentimental Journey.'

Lydia. Heigh-ho! What are those books by the glass?

Lucy. The great one is only 'The Whole Duty of Man,' where I press a few blonds, ma'am.

Lydia. Very well. Give me the sal volatile.

Lucy. Is it in a blue cover, ma'am?

Lydia. My smelling bottle, you simpleton!

Lucy. O, the drops! here, ma'am.

Lydia. Hold! here's some one coming—quick, see who it is—— [*Exit* LUCY.

Surely I heard my cousin Julia's voice!

Re-enter LUCY.

Lucy. Lud! ma'am, here is Miss Melville!

Lydia. Is it possible?——

Enter JULIA.

My dearest Julia, how delighted am I! [*Embrace.*] How unexpected was this happiness!

Julia. True, Lydia; and our pleasure is the greater; but what has been the matter? You were denied to me at first.

Lydia. Ah, Julia, I have a thousand things to tell you! but first inform me what has conjured you to Bath? Is Sir Anthony here?

Julia. He is; we are arrived within this hour; and, I suppose, he will be here to wait on Mrs Malaprop as soon as he is dressed.

Lydia. Then, before we are interrupted, let me impart to you some of my distress! I know your gentle nature will sympathize with me, though your prudence may condemn me: My letters have informed you of my whole connection with Beverley—but I have lost him, Julia! My aunt has discovered our intercourse, by a note she intercepted, and has confined me ever since. Yet, would you believe it? she has fallen absolutely in love with a tall Irish baronet she met one night since we have been here at Lady Macshuffle's rout.

Julia. You jest, Lydia?

Lydia. No, upon my word! She really carries on a kind of correspondence with him, under a feigned name though, till she chuses to be known to him—But it is a Delia or a Celia, I assure you!

Julia. Then surely she is now more indulgent to her niece?

Lydia. Quite the contrary. Since she has discovered her own frailty, she has become more suspicious of mine. Then I must inform you of another plague! That odious Acres is to be in Bath to-day; so that I protest I shall be teased out of all spirits!

Julia. Come, come, Lydia, hope for the best. Sir Anthony shall use his interest with Mrs Malaprop.

Lydia. But you have not heard the worst: Unfortunately I had quarrelled with my poor Beverley, just before my aunt made the discovery, and I have not seen him since, to make it up.

Julia. What was his offence?

Lydia. Nothing at all! But I don't know how it was, as often as we had been together, we had never had a quarrel: And, somehow, I was afraid he would never give me an opportunity. So, last Thursday I wrote a letter to myself, to inform myself that Beverley was at that time paying his addresses to another woman. I signed it, 'Your Friend Unknown,' shewed it to Beverley, charged him with his falsehood, put myself in a violent passion, and vowed I'd never see him more.

Julia. And you let him depart so, and have not seen him since?

Lydia. 'Twas the next day my aunt found the matter out. I intended only to have teased him three days and a half, and now I've lost him for ever.

Julia. If he is as deserving and sincere as you have represented him to me, he will never give you up so. Yet consider, Lydia; you tell me he is but an ensign, and you have thirty thousand pounds!

Lydia. But you know I lose most of my fortune if I marry without my aunt's consent, till of age; and that is what I have determined to do, ever since I knew the penalty. Nor could I love the man, who would wish to wait a day for the alternative.

Julia. Nay, this is caprice!

Lydia. What, does Julia tax me with caprice? I thought her lover, Faulkland, had inured her to it.

Julia. I do not love even his faults.

Lydia. But, à propos! you have sent to him, I suppose?

Julia. Not yet, upon my word! nor has he the least idea of my being in Bath. Sir Anthony's resolution was so sudden, I could not inform him of it.

Lydia. Well, Julia, you are your own mistress, (though under the protection of Sir Anthony,) yet have you, for this long year, been a slave to the caprice, the whim, the jealousy of this ungrateful Faulkland, who will ever delay assuming the rights of a husband, while you suffer him to be equally imperious as a lover.

Julia. Nay, you are wrong entirely. We were contracted before my father's death. That, and some consequent embarrassments, have delayed what I know to be my Faulkland's most ardent wish. He is too generous to trifle on such a point. And, for his character, you wrong him there too. No, Lydia, he is too proud, too noble to be jealous; if he is captious, 'tis without dissembling; if fretful, without rudeness. Unused to the fopperies of love, he is negligent of the

little duties expected from a lover—but being unhackneyed in the passion, his affection is ardent and sincere; and, as it engrosses his whole soul, he expects every thought and emotion of his mistress to move in unison with his. Yet, though his pride calls for this full return, his humility makes him undervalue those qualities in him, which would entitle him to it; and, not feeling why he should be loved to the degree he wishes, he still suspects that he is not loved enough. This temper, I must own, has cost me many unhappy hours; but I have learned to think myself his debtor for those imperfections which arise from the ardour of his attachment.

Lydia. Well, I cannot blame you for defending him. But, tell me candidly, Julia, had he never saved your life, do you think you should have been attached to him as you are? Believe me, the rude blast that overset your boat, was a prosperous gale of love to him.

Julia. Gratitude may have strengthened my attachment to Mr Faulkland, but I loved him before he had preserved me; yet, surely, that alone were an obligation sufficient——

Lydia. Obligation! Why, a water-spaniel would have done as much! Well, I should never think of giving my heart to a man, because he could swim!

Julia. Come, Lydia, you are too inconsiderate.

Lydia. Nay, I do but jest. What's here?

Enter LUCY, *in a hurry.*

Lucy. O, madam, here is Sir Anthony Absolute just come home with your aunt!

Lydia. They'll not come here. Lucy, do you watch. [*Exit* LUCY.

Julia. Yet I must go. Sir Anthony does not know I am here, and if we meet, he'll detain me, to shew me the town. I'll take another opportunity of paying my respects to Mrs Malaprop, when she shall treat me, as long as she chooses, with her select words so ingeniously misapplied, without being mispronounced.

Re-enter LUCY.

Lucy. O lud! Ma'am, they are both coming up stairs!

Lydia. Well, I'll not detain you, coz. Adieu, my dear Julia; I'm sure you are in haste to send to Faulkland. There—through my room you'll find another stair-case.

Julia. Adieu!—[*Embrace.*] [*Exit* JULIA.

Lydia. Here, my dear Lucy, hide these books. Quick, quick! Fling Peregrine Pickle under the toilet—throw Roderick Random into the closet,—put the Innocent Adultery into the Whole Duty of Man—thrust Lord Aimworth under the sofa—cram Ovid behind the bolster—there—put the Man of Feeling into your pocket—so, so; now, lay Mrs Chapone in sight, and leave Fordyce's Sermons open on the table.

Lucy. O, burn it! Madam, the hair-dresser has torn away as far as Proper Pride.

Lydia. Never mind—open at Sobriety. Fling me Lord Chesterfield's Letters. Now for them.

Enter Mrs MALAPROP, *and Sir* ANTHONY ABSOLUTE.

Mrs Mal. There, Sir Anthony, there sits the deliberate simpleton, who wants to disgrace her family, and lavish herself on a fellow not worth a shilling.

Lydia. Madam, I thought you once——

Mrs Mal. You thought, miss! I don't know any business you have to think at all. Thought does not become a young woman. But the point we would request of you is, that you will promise to forget this fellow——to illiterate him, I say, quite from your memory.

Lydia. Ah, madam! our memories are independent of our wills. It is not easy to forget.

Mrs Mal. But I say it is, miss; there is nothing on earth so easy as to forget, if a person chooses to set about it. I'm sure I have as much forgot your poor dear uncle, as if he had never existed—and I thought it my duty so to do; and let me tell you, Lydia, these violent memories don't become a young woman.

Sir Anth. Why, sure, she won't pretend to remember what she's ordered not! Ay, this comes of her reading!

Lydia. What crime, madam, have I committed, to be treated thus?

Mrs Mal. Now, don't attempt to extirpate yourself from the matter; you know I have proof controvertible of it. But tell me, will you promise to do as you are bid? Will you take a husband of your friends' choosing?

Lydia. Madam, I must tell you plainly, that had I no preference for any one else, the choice you have made would be my aversion.

Mrs Mal. What business have you, miss, with preference and aversion? They don't become a young woman; and you ought to know, that, as both always wear off, 'tis safest in matrimony to begin with a little aversion. I'm sure I hated your poor dear uncle, before marriage, as if he'd been a black-a-moor—and yet, miss, you are sensible what a wife I made! and when it pleased Heaven to release me from him, 'tis unknown what tears I shed! But suppose we were going to give you another choice, will you promise us to give up this Beverley?

Lydia. Could I belie my thoughts so far as to give that promise, my actions would certainly as far belie my words.

Mrs Mal. Take yourself to your room. You are fit company for nothing but your own ill humours.

Lydia. Willingly, madam—I cannot change for the worse. [*Exit* LYDIA.

Mrs Mal. There's a little intricate hussy for you!

Sir Anth. It is not to be wondered at, madam: all this is the natural consequence of teaching girls to read. Had I a thousand daughters, by

Heaven, I'd as soon have them taught the black art as their alphabet!

Mrs Mal. Nay, nay; Sir Anthony, you are an absolute misanthropy.

Sir Anth. In my way hither, Mrs Malaprop, I observed your niece's maid coming forth from a circulating library; she had a book in each hand; they were half-bound volumes, with marble covers: from that moment I guessed how full of duty I should see her mistress.

Mrs Mal. Those are vile places, indeed!

Sir Anth. Madam, a circulating library in a town, is as an ever-green tree of diabolical knowledge; it blossoms through the year: and, depend on it, Mrs Malaprop, that they, who are so fond of handling the leaves, will long for the fruit at last.

Mrs Mal. Fie, fie; Sir Anthony, you surely speak laconically.

Sir Anth. Why, Mrs Malaprop, in moderation, now, what would you have a woman know?

Mrs Mal. Observe me, Sir Anthony. I would by no means wish a daughter of mine to be a progeny of learning; I don't think so much learning becomes a young woman; for instance—I would never let her meddle with Greek, or Hebrew, or algebra, or simony, or fluxions, or paradoxes, or such inflammatory branches of learning; neither would it be necessary for her to handle any of your mathematical, astronomical, diabolical instruments: but, Sir Anthony, I would send her, at nine years old, to a boarding-school, in order to learn a little ingenuity and artifice. Then, sir, she should have a supercilious knowledge in accounts; and, as she grew up, I would have her instructed in geometry, that she might know something of the contagious countries; but above all, Sir Anthony, she should be mistress of orthodoxy, that she might not mis-spel, and mis-pronounce words so shamefully as girls usually do; and likewise, that she might reprehend the true meaning of what she is saying. This, Sir Anthony, is what I would have a woman know; and I don't think there is a superstitious article in it.

Sir Anth. Well, well, Mrs Malaprop, I will dispute the point no further with you; though I must confess, that you are a truly moderate and polite arguer, for almost every third word you say is on my side of the question. But, Mrs Malaprop, to the more important point in debate—you say you have no objection to my proposal?

Mrs Mal. None, I assure you. I am under no positive engagement with Mr Acres; and as Lydia is so obstinate against him, perhaps your son may have better success.

Sir Anth. Well, madam, I will write for the boy directly. He knows not a syllable of this yet, though I have for some time had the proposal in my head. He is at present with his regiment.

Mrs Mal. We have never seen your son, Sir Anthony; but I hope no objection on his side?

Sir Anth. Objection! Let him object if he dare! No, no, Mrs Malaprop, Jack knows that the least demur puts me in a frenzy directly. My process was always very simple; in their younger days, 'twas 'Jack, do this;' if he demurred, I knocked him down; and if he grumbled at that, I always sent him out of the room.

Mrs Mal. Ay; and the properest way, o' my conscience! Nothing is so conciliating to young people as severity. Well, Sir Anthony, I shall give Mr Acres his discharge, and prepare Lydia to receive your son's invocations; and I hope you will represent her to the captain as an object not altogether illegible.

Sir Anth. Madam, I will handle the subject prudently. Well, I must leave you; and let me beg you, Mrs Malaprop, to enforce this matter roundly to the girl; take my advice, keep a tight hand; if she rejects this proposal, clap her under lock and key; and if you were just to let the servants forget to bring her dinner for three or four days, you cann't conceive how she'd come about.

[*Exit Sir* ANTH.

Mrs Mal. Well; at any rate I shall be glad to get her from under my intuition. She has somehow discovered my partiality for Sir Lucius O'-Trigger—sure Lucy cann't have betrayed me! No; the girl is such a simpleton, I should have made her confess it. Lucy! Lucy!—[*Calls.*]—Had she been one of your artificial ones, I should never have trusted her.

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. Did you call, madam?

Mrs Mal. Yes, girl. Did you see Sir Lucius while you was out?

Lucy. No, indeed, madam, not a glimpse of him.

Mrs Mal. You are sure, Lucy, that you never mentioned——

Lucy. O gemini! I'd sooner cut my tongue out.

Mrs Mal. Well; don't let your simplicity be imposed on.

Lucy. No, madam.

Mrs Mal. So, come to me presently, and I'll give you another letter to Sir Lucius; but mind, Lucy, if ever you betray what you are intrusted with, (unless it be other people's secrets to me,) you forfeit my malevolence for ever; and your being a simpleton shall be no excuse for your locality.

[*Exit Mrs* MAL.

Lucy. Ha, ha, ha! So, my dear simplicity, let me give you a little respite—[*Altering her manner.*]—Let girls in my station be as fond as they please of appearing expert and knowing in their trusts, commend me to a mask of silliness, and a pair of sharp eyes for my own interest under it! Let me see! to what account have I turned my simplicity lately—[*Looks at a paper.*]—For abetting Miss Lydia Languish in a design of running away with an ensign! in money, sundry times, twelve pound twelve—gowns, five—hats, ruffles, caps, &c.—numberless! From the said ensign, within this last month, six guineas and a half—About a quarter's pay! *Item.* From Mrs

Malaprop, for betraying the young people to her—when I found matters were like to be discovered—two guineas, and a black padusoy. *Item.* From Mr Acres, for carrying divers letters—which I never delivered—two guineas, and a pair of buckles. *Item.* From Sir Lucius O'Trigger, three crowns, two gold pocket-pieces, and a silver snuff-box! Well done, simplicity! Yet I was forced to make my Hibernian believe, that he was corresponding, not with the aunt, but with the niece: for, though not over-rich, I found he had too much pride and delicacy to sacrifice the feelings of a gentleman to the necessities of his fortune. [*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Captain* ABSOLUTE'S *Lodgings.*

Enter Captain ABSOLUTE *and* FAG.

Fag. Sir, while I was there, Sir Anthony came in: I told him, you had sent me to inquire after his health, and to know if he was at leisure to see you.

Abs. And what did he say on hearing I was at Bath?

Fag. Sir, in my life I never saw an elderly gentleman more astonished; he started back two or three paces, rapt out a dozen interjectural oaths, and asked, what the devil had brought you here?

Abs. Well, sir, and what did you say?

Fag. O, I lied, sir; I forget the precise lie: but you may depend on't, he got no truth from me. Yet, with submission, for fear of blunders in future, I should be glad to fix what has brought us to Bath: in order that we may lie a little consistently. Sir Anthony's servants were curious, sir; very curious indeed.

Abs. You have said nothing to them?——

Fag. O, not a word, sir; not a word. Mr Thomas, indeed, the coachman, (whom I take to be the discreetest of whips)——

Abs. 'Sdeath! You rascal! You have not trusted him?

Fag. O no, sir; no, no; not a syllable, upon my veracity! He was, indeed, a little inquisitive; but I was sly, sir, devilish sly!—My master, (said I,) honest Thomas, (you know, sir, one says honest to one's inferiors,) is come to Bath to recruit—Yes, sir, I said, to recruit; and whether for men, money, or constitution, you know, sir, is nothing to him, nor any one else.

Abs. Well, recruit will do; let it be so—

Fag. O, sir, recruit will do surprisingly—indeed, to give the thing an air, I told Thomas, that your honour had already inlisted five disbanded chairmen, seven minority waiters, and thirteen billiard-markers.

Abs. You blockhead, never say more than is necessary!

Fag. I beg pardon, sir, I beg pardon; but, with submission, a lie is nothing unless one supports it. Sir, whenever I draw on my invention for a good current lie, I always forge indorsements as well as the bill.

Abs. Well, take care you don't hurt your credit, by offering too much security.—Is Mr Faulkland returned?

Fag. He is above, sir, changing his dress.

Abs. Can you tell whether he has been informed of Sir Anthony's and Miss Melville's arrival?

Fag. I fancy not, sir; he has seen no one since he came in, but his gentleman who was with him at Bristol. I think, sir, I hear Mr Faulkland coming down.

Abs. Go, tell him I am here.

Fag. Yes, sir. [*Going.*] I beg pardon, sir; but should Sir Anthony call, you will do me the favour to remember, that we are recruiting, if you please?

Abs. Well, well.

Fag. And, in tenderness to my character, if your honour could bring in the chairmen and waiters, I should esteem it as an obligation; for though I never scruple a lie to serve my master, yet it hurts one's conscience to be found out. [*Exit.*

Abs. Now for my whimsical friend—if he does not know that his mistress is here, I'll teaze him a little before I tell him———

Enter FAULKLAND.

Faulkland, you're welcome to Bath again! you are punctual in your return.

Faulk. Yes; I had nothing to detain me, when I had finished the business I went on. Well, what news since I left you? How stand matters between you and Lydia?

Abs. Faith, much as they were; I have not seen her since our quarrel; however, I expect to be recalled every hour.

Faulk. Why don't you persuade her to go off with you at once?

Abs. What, and lose two-thirds of her fortune? You forget that, my friend. No, no; I could have brought her to that long ago.

Faulk. Nay, then, you trifle too long—if you are sure of her, propose to the aunt in your own character, and write to Sir Anthony for his consent.

Abs. Softly, softly; for though I am convinced my little Lydia would elope with me as Ensign Beverley, yet am I by no means certain that she would take me with the impediment of our friends' consent, a regular hum-drum wedding, and the reversion of a good fortune on my side: No, no; I must prepare her gradually for the discovery, and make myself necessary to her, before I risk it. Well, but, Faulkland, you'll dine with us today at the hotel?

Faulk. Indeed, I cannot; I am not in spirits to be of such a party.

Abs. By heavens! I shall forswear your company. You are the most teasing, captious, incorrigible lover! Do love like a man.

Faulk. I own I am unfit for company.

Abs. Am not I a lover, ay, and a romantic one too? Yet, do I carry every where with me such a confounded farrago of doubts, fears, hopes, wishes, and all the flimsy furniture of a country miss's brain?

Faulk. Ah, Jack! your heart and soul are not, like mine, fixed immutably on one only object. You throw for a large stake, but losing—you could stake, and throw again: but I have set my sum of happiness on this cast, and not to succeed, were to be stript of all.

Abs. But, for Heaven's sake! what grounds for apprehension can your whimsical brain conjure up at present?

Faulk. What grounds for apprehension, did you say? Heavens! are there not a thousand? I fear for her spirits, her health, her life—My absence may fret her; her anxiety for my return, her fears for me, may oppress her gentle temper. And for her health—does not every hour bring me cause to be alarmed? If it rains, some shower may even then have chilled her delicate frame! If the wind be keen, some rude blast may have affected her! The heat of noon, the dews of the evening, may endanger the life of her, for whom only I value mine. O, Jack! when delicate and feeling souls are separated, there is not a feature in the sky, not a movement of the elements, not an aspiration of the breeze, but hints some cause for a lover's apprehension!

Abs. Ay, but we may chuse whether we will take the hint or not. So then, Faulkland, if you were convinced that Julia were well and in spirits, you would be entirely content.

Faulk. I should be happy beyond measure—I am anxious only for that.

Abs. Then, to cure your anxiety at once—Miss Melville is in perfect health, and is at this moment in Bath.

Faulk. Nay, Jack—don't trifle with me.

Abs. She is arrived here, with my father, within this hour.

Faulk. Can you be serious?

Abs. I thought you knew Sir Anthony better than to be surprised at a sudden whim of this kind. Seriously, then, it is as I tell you—upon my honour.

Faulk. My dear friend!—Hollo, Du Peigne! my hat—my dear Jack—now, nothing on earth can give me a moment's uneasiness.

Enter FAG.

Fag. Sir, Mr Acres, just arrived, is below.

Abs. Stay, Faulkland, this Acres lives within a mile of Sir Anthony, and he shall tell you how your mistress has been ever since you left her.—Fag, shew the gentleman up. [*Exit* FAG.

Faulk. What, is he much acquainted in the family?

Abs. O, very intimate: I insist on your not going: besides, his character will divert you.

Faulk. Well, I should like to ask him a few questions.

Abs. He is likewise a rival of mine—that is, of my other self's, for he does not think his friend Captain Absolute ever saw the lady in question; and it is ridiculous enough to hear him complain to me of one Beverley, a concealed, sculking rival, who——

Faulk. Hush! he's here.

Enter ACRES.

Acres. Hah! my dear friend, noble captain, and honest Jack, how dost thou? just arrived, faith, as you see. Sir, your humble servant. Warm work on the roads, Jack—Odds whips and wheels! I've travelled like a comet, with a tail of dust all the way, as long as the Mall.

Abs. Ah! Bob, you are indeed an eccentric planet; but we know your attraction hither—— Give me leave to introduce Mr Faulkland to you. Mr Faulkland, Mr Acres.

Acres. Sir, I am most heartily glad to see you: Sir, I solicit your connexions.—Hey, Jack, what, this is Mr Faulkland, who——

Abs. Ay, Bob, Miss Melville's Mr Faulkland.

Acres. Odso! she and your father can be but just arrived before me—I suppose you have seen them. Ah! Mr Faulkland, you are indeed a happy man.

Faulk. I have not seen Miss Melville yet, sir; I hope she enjoyed full health and spirits in Devonshire?

Acres. Never knew her better in my life, sir; never better. Odds blushes and blooms! she has been as healthy as the German Spa.

Faulk. Indeed! I did hear that she had been a little indisposed.

Acres. False, false, sir; only said to vex you: quite the reverse, I assure you.

Faulk. There, Jack, you see she has the advantage of me; I had almost fretted myself ill.

Abs. Now are you angry with your mistress for not having been sick!

Faulk. No, no; you misunderstand me: yet surely a little trifling indisposition is not an unnatural consequence of absence from those we love. Now, confess, isn't there something unkind in this violent, robust, unfeeling health!

Abs. O, it was very unkind of her to be well in your absence, to be sure!

Acres. Good apartments, Jack.

Faulk. Well, sir, but you was saying that Miss Melville has been so exceedingly well—what, then, she has been merry and gay, I suppose?—Always in spirits, hey?

Acres. Merry! odds crickets, she has been the bell and spirit of the company wherever she has been—so lively and entertaining! so full of wit and humour!

Faulk. There, Jack, there! O, by my soul, there is an innate levity in woman, that nothing can overcome! What! happy and I away?

Abs. Have done: How foolish this is! just

now, you were only apprehensive for your mistress's spirits.

Faulk. Why, Jack, have I been the joy and spirit of the company?

Abs. No, indeed, you have not.

Faulk. Have I been lively and entertaining?

Abs. O, upon my word, I acquit you.

Faulk. Have I been full of wit and humour?

Abs. No, faith; to do you justice, you have been confoundedly stupid indeed.

Acres. What's the matter with the gentleman?

Abs. He is only expressing his great satisfaction at hearing that Julia has been so well and happy, that's all—hey, Faulkland?

Faulk. Oh! I am rejoiced to hear it—yes, yes, she has a happy disposition!

Acres. That she has indeed—then she is so accomplished, so sweet a voice, so expert at her harpsichord, such a mistress of flat and sharp—squallante, rumblante, and quiverante!—there was this time month, odds minnums and crotchets! how she did chirup at Mrs Piano's concert!

Faulk. There again, what say you to this? you see she has been all mirth and song—not a thought of me!

Abs. Pho! man! is not music the food of love?

Faulk. Well, well, it may be so.—Pray, Mr ——what's his damned name?—Do you remember what songs Miss Melville sung?

Acres. Not I, indeed.

Abs. Stay now, they were some pretty melancholy purling-stream airs, I warrant; perhaps you may recollect: did she sing—'When absent from my soul's delight?'

Acres. No, that wa'n't it.

Abs. Or—'Go, gentle gales!'—'Go, gentle gales!' [*Sings.*

Acres. O no! nothing like it. Odds! now I recollect one of them—'My heart's my own, my will is free.' [*Sings.*

Faulk. Fool! fool that I am! to fix all my happiness on such a trifler! 'Sdeath! to make herself the pipe and ballad-monger of a circle! to soothe her light heart with catches and glees! What can you say to this, sir?

Abs. Why, that I should be glad to hear my mistress had been so merry, sir.

Faulk. Nay, nay, nay; I'm not sorry that she has been happy—no, no; I am glad of that—I would not have had her sad or sick—yet, surely, a sympathetic heart would have shewn itself even in the choice of a song—she might have been temperately healthy, and, somehow, plaintively gay—but she has been dancing too, I doubt not!

Acres. What does the gentleman say about dancing?

Abs. He says the lady we speak of dances as well as she sings.

Acres. Ay, truly, does she—there was at our last race ball——

Faulk. Hell and the devil! There! there—I told you so! I told you so! Oh! she thrives in my absence!—Dancing! but her whole feelings have been in opposition with mine. I have been anxious, silent, pensive, sedentary—my days have been hours of care, my nights of watchfulness. She has been all health! spirit! laugh! song! dance!—Oh! damned, damned levity!

Abs. For Heaven's sake, Faulkland, don't expose yourself so! Suppose she has danced, what then? does not the ceremony of society often oblige——

Faulk. Well, well, I'll contain myself—perhaps, as you say, for form sake. What, Mr Acres, you were praising Miss Melville's manner of dancing a minuet, hey?

Acres. O, I dare insure her for that—but what I was going to speak of was her country-dancing: Odds swimmings! she has such an air with her!

Faulk. Now disappointment on her!—defend this, Absolute! why don't you defend this?—Country-dances! jigs and reels! am I to blame now? A minuet I could have forgiven—I should not have minded that—I say I should not have regarded a minuet; but country-dances!—Zounds! had she made one in a cotillion, I believe I could have forgiven that; but to be monkey-led for a night! to run the gauntlet through a string of amorous palming puppies; to shew paces like a managed filly!—O, Jack, there never can be but one man in the world, whom a truly modest and delicate woman ought to pair with in a country-dance; and even then, the rest of the couples should be her great uncles and aunts!

Abs. Ay, to be sure! grandfathers and grandmothers!

Faulk. If there be but one vicious mind in the set, 'twill spread like a contagion: the action of their pulse beats to the lascivious movement of the jig; their quivering, warm-breathed sighs, impregnate the very air; the atmosphere becomes electrical to love; and each amorous spark darts through every link of the chain!—I must leave you—I own I am somewhat flurried; and that confounded looby has perceived it. [*Going.*

Abs. Nay, but stay, Faulkland, and thank Mr Acres for his good news!

Faulk. Damn his news! [*Exit* FAULK.

Abs. Ha, ha, ha! poor Faulkland! Five minutes since, nothing on earth could give him a moment's uneasiness!

Acres. The gentleman was not angry at my praising his mistress! was he?

Abs. A little jealous, I believe, Bob.

Acres. You don't say so? Ha, ha! jealous of me! that's a good joke!

Abs. There's nothing strange in that, Bob; let me tell you, that sprightly grace, and insinuating manner of yours, will do some mischief among the girls here!

Acres. Ah, you joke! ha, ha, mischief! ha, ha! but, you know, I am not my own property; my dear Lydia has forestalled me! She could never abide me in the country, because I used to dress so badly; but odds frogs and tambours, I sha'n't take matters so here—now, ancient madam has no voice in it—I'll make my old clothes know who's master—I shall straightway cashier the

hunting-frock, and render my leather breeches incapable—My hair has been in training some time.

Abs. Indeed!

Acres. Ay; and tho'ff the side curls are a little restive, my hind-part takes it very kindly.

Abs. O, you'll polish, I doubt not.

Acres. Absolutely I propose so—then, if I can find out this Ensign Beverley, odds triggers and flints! I'll make him know the difference o't.

Abs. Spoke like a man!—but pray, Bob, I observe you have got an odd kind of a new method of swearing——

Acres. Ha, ha! you've taken notice of it—'tis genteel, is not it?—I did not invent it myself though; but a commander in our militia, a great scholar, I assure you, says that there is no meaning in the common oaths; and that nothing but their antiquity makes them respectable; because, he says, the ancients would never stick to an oath or two, but would say, by Jove! or by Bacchus! or by Mars! or by Venus! or by Pallas! according to the sentiment; so that, to swear with propriety, says my little major, the oath should be an echo to the sense; and this we call the oath referential, or sentimental swearing, ha, ha, ha! 'tis genteel, is not it?

Abs. Very genteel, and very new, indeed; and, I dare say, will supplant all other figures of imprecation.

Acres. Ay, ay, the best terms will grow obsolete—Damns have had their day.

Enter FAG.

Fag. Sir, there is a gentleman below desires to see you—Shall I shew him into the parlour?

Abs. Ay; you may.

Acres. Well, I must be gone——

Abs. Stay; who is it, Fag?

Fag. Your father, sir.

Abs. You puppy, why did not you shew him up directly? [*Exit* FAG.

Acres. You have business with Sir Anthony. I expect a message from Mrs Malaprop at my lodgings. I have sent also to my dear friend Sir Lucius O'Trigger. Adieu, Jack; we must meet at night, when you shall give me a dozen bumpers to little Lydia.

Abs. That I will with all my heart. [*Exit* ACRES.] Now for a parental lecture. I hope he has heard nothing of the business that has brought me here. I wish the gout had held him fast in Devonshire, with all my soul!

Enter Sir ANTHONY.

Sir, I am delighted to see you here, and looking so well! your sudden arrival at Bath made me apprehensive for your health.

Sir Anth. Very apprehensive, I dare say, Jack. What! you are recruiting here, hey?

Abs. Yes, sir; I am on duty.

Sir Anth. Well, Jack, I am glad to see you, though I did not expect it; for I was going to write to you on a little matter of business. Jack, I have been considering that I grow old and infirm, and shall probably not trouble you long.

Abs. Pardon me, sir! I never saw you look more strong and hearty; and I pray fervently that you may continue so.

Sir Anth. I hope your prayers may be heard with all my heart. Well, then, Jack, I have been considering that I am so strong and hearty, I may continue to plague you a long time. Now, Jack, I am sensible that the income of your commission, and what I have hitherto allowed you, is but a small pittance for a lad of your spirit.

Abs. Sir, you are very good.

Sir Anth. And it is my wish, while yet I live, to have my boy make some figure in the world. I have resolved, therefore, to fix you at once in a noble independence.

Abs. Sir, your kindness overpowers me—such generosity makes the gratitude of reason more lively than the sensations even of filial affection.

Sir Anth. I am glad you are so sensible of my attention; and you shall be master of a large estate in a few weeks.

Abs. Let my future life, sir, speak my gratitude; I cannot express the sense I have of your munificence. Yet, sir, I presume you would not wish me to quit the army?

Sir Anth. O, that shall be as your wife chooses.

Abs. My wife, sir!

Sir Anth. Ay, ay; settle that between you; settle that between you.

Abs. A wife, sir! did you say?

Sir Anth. Ay, a wife; why, did not I mention her before?

Abs. Not a word of her, sir.

Sir Anth. Odd so!—I must not forget her though. Yes, Jack, the independence I was talking of, is by a marriage; the fortune is saddled with a wife; but, I suppose, that makes no difference?

Abs. Sir, sir?—you amaze me!

Sir Anth. Why, what the devil's the matter with the fool? Just now, you were all gratitude and duty.

Abs. I was, sir—you talked to me of independence and a fortune, but not a word of a wife!

Sir Anth. Why, what difference does that make! Odds life, sir! if you have the estate, you must take it with the live stock on it, as it stands.

Abs. If my happiness is to be the price, I must beg leave to decline the purchase.——Pray, sir, who is the lady?

Sir Anth. What's that to you, sir?—Come, give me your promise to love, and to marry her directly.

Abs. Sure, sir, this is not very reasonable, to summon my affections for a lady I know nothing of!

Sir Anth. I am sure, sir, 'tis more unreasonable in you to object to a lady you know nothing of.

Abs. Then, sir, I must tell you plainly, that my inclinations are fixed on another—my heart is engaged to an angel!

Sir Anth. Then, pray, let it send an excuse. It is very sorry—but business prevents its waiting on her.

Abs. But my vows are pledged to her.

Sir Anth. Let her foreclose, Jack; let her foreclose; they are not worth redeeming; besides, you have the angel's vows in exchange, I suppose; so there can be no loss there.

Abs. You must excuse me, sir, if I tell you, once for all, that in this point I cannot obey you.

Sir Anth. Hark'e, Jack;—I have heard you for some time with patience—I have been cool—quite cool; but take care—you know I am complaisance itself—when I am not thwarted;—no one more easily led, when I have my own way;—but don't put me in a phrenzy.

Abs. Sir, I must repeat it—in this, I cannot obey you.

Sir Anth. Now, damn me if ever I call you Jack again while I live!

Abs. Nay, sir, but hear me.

Sir Anth. Sir, I won't hear a word—not a word—not one word! so give me your promise by a nod—and I'll tell you what, Jack—I mean, you dog—if you don't, by———

Abs. What, sir, promise to link myself to some mass of ugliness? to———

Sir Anth. Zounds, sirrah! the lady shall be as ugly as I choose: she shall have a hump on each shoulder; she shall be as crooked as the crescent; her one eye shall roll like the bull's in Cox's museum; she shall have a skin like a mummy; and the beard of a Jew:—she shall be all this, sirrah!—yet, I will make you ogle her all day, and sit up all night to write sonnets on her beauty.

Abs. This is reason and moderation, indeed!

Sir Anth. None of your sneering, puppy! no grinning, jackanapes!

Abs. Indeed, sir, I never was in a worse humour for mirth in my life.

Sir Anth. 'Tis false, sir; I know you are laughing in your sleeve; I know you'll grin when I am gone, sirrah!

Abs. Sir, I hope I know my duty better.

Sir Anth. None of your passion, sir; none of your violence, if you please—It won't do with me, I promise you.

Abs. Indeed, sir, I never was cooler in my life.

Sir Anth. 'Tis a confounded lie!—I know you are in a passion in your heart; I know you are, you hypocritical young dog! but it won't do.

Abs. Nay, sir, upon my word!

Sir Anth. So you will fly out? can't you be cool, like me? What the devil good can passion do?—Passion is of no service, you impudent, insolent, overbearing reprobate! There, you sneer again!—Don't provoke me!—but you rely upon the mildness of my temper—you do, you dog! you play upon the meekness of my disposition! Yet, take care—the patience of a saint may be overcome at last!—but mark! I give you six hours and a half to consider of this: if you then agree, without any condition, to do every thing on earth that I choose, why—confound you! I may in time forgive you—If not, zounds, don't enter the same hemisphere with me! don't dare to breathe the same air, or use the same light with me; but get an atmosphere and a sun of your own! I'll strip you of your commission; I'll lodge a five-and-threepence in the hands of trustees, and you shall live on the interest.—I'll disown you, I'll disinherit you, I'll unget you! and damn me, if ever I call you Jack again! [*Exit* SIR ANTH.

Abs. Mild, gentle, considerate father, I kiss your hands. What a tender method of giving his opinion in these matters Sir Anthony has! I dare not trust him with the truth. I wonder what old, wealthy hag it is that he wants to bestow on me!—yet, he married, himself, for love! and was, in his youth, a bold intriguer, and a gay companion!

Enter FAG.

Fag. Assuredly, sir, your father is wrath to a degree: he comes down stairs eight or ten steps at a time, muttering, growling, and thumping the banisters all the way: I, and the cook's dog, stand bowing at the door—rap! he gives me a stroke on the head with his cane, bids me carry that to my master; then, kicking the poor turnspit into the area, damns us all, for a puppy triumvirate!—Upon my credit, sir, were I in your place, and found my father such very bad company, I should certainly drop his acquaintance.

Abs. Cease your impertinence, sir, at present—Did you come in for nothing more?—Stand out of the way. [*Pushes him aside, and exit.*

Fag. So, Sir Anthony trims my master: He is afraid to reply to his father, then vents his spleen on poor Fag!—When one is vexed by one person, to revenge one's self on another, who happens to come in the way—is the vilest injustice! Ah! it shews the worst temper—the basest——

Enter Errand Boy.

Boy. Mr Fag! Mr Fag! your master calls you.

Fag. Well, you little dirty puppy, you need not bawl so!—The meanest disposition! the—

Boy. Quick, quick, Mr Fag.

Fag. Quick, quick, you impudent jackanapes! am I to be commanded by you, too! you little impertinent, insolent, kitchen-bred——

[*Exit, kicking and beating him.*

SCENE II.—*The North Parade.*

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. So—I shall have another rival to add to my mistress's list—Captain Absolute.——However, I shall not enter his name till my purse has received notice in form. Poor Acres is dismissed!—Well, I have done him a last friendly office, in letting him know that Beverley was here before him. Sir Lucius is generally more punctual, when he expects to hear from his *dear Dalia*, as he calls her: I wonder he's not here!—I have a little scruple of conscience from this deceit; though I should not be paid so well, if my hero knew that Delia was near fifty, and her own mistress.

Enter Sir LUCIUS O'TRIGGER.

Sir Luc. Hah! my little ambassadress—Upon my conscience, I have been looking for you; I have been on the south parade this half hour.

Lucy. [*Speaking simply.*] O gemini! and I have been waiting for your worship here on the north!

Sir Luc. Faith!—may be, that was the reason we did not meet; and it is very comical too, how you could go out, and I not see you—for I was only taking a nap at the parade coffee-house, and I chose the window, on purpose that I might not miss you.

Lucy. My stars! Now, I would wager a sixpence I went by while you were asleep!

Sir Luc. Sure enough it must have been so—and I never dreamt it was so late till I waked. Well, but my little girl, have you got nothing for me?

Lucy. Yes, but I have——I've got a letter for you in my pocket.

Sir Luc. O, faith, I guessed you were not come empty-handed! Well; let me see what the dear creature says.

Lucy. There, Sir Lucius. [*Gives him a letter.*

Sir Luc. [*Reads.*] "Sir—There is often a sudden incentive impulse in love, that has a greater induction than years of domestic combination: such was the commotion I felt at the first superfluous view of Sir Lucius O'Trigger." Very pretty, upon my word. "Female punctuation forbids me to say more; yet, let me add, that it will give me joy infallible to find Sir Lucius worthy the last criterion of my affections. DELIA." Upon my conscience, Lucy, your lady is a great mistress of language! Faith, she's quite the queen of the dictionary! for the devil a word dare refuse coming at her call——though one would think it was quite out of hearing.

Lucy. Ay, sir, a lady of her experience.

Sir Luc. Experience! what, at seventeen!

Lucy. O, true, sir—but then she reads so—my stars! how she will read off hand!

Sir Luc. Faith, she must be very deep read to write this way, though she is rather an arbitrary writer, too; for here are a great many poor words pressed into the service of this note, that would get their habeas corpus from any court in Christendom.

Lucy. Ah, Sir Lucius! If you were to hear how she talks of you!

Sir Luc. O, tell her I'll make her the best husband in the world, and Lady O'Trigger into the bargain! But we must get the old gentlewoman's consent, and do every thing fairly.

Lucy. Nay, Sir Lucius; I thought you was not rich enough to be so nice!

Sir Luc. Upon my word, young woman, you have hit it: I am so poor, that I cannot afford to do a dirty action. If I did not want money, I would steal your mistress and her fortune with a great deal of pleasure. However, my pretty girl, [*Gives her money,*] here's a little something to buy you a ribband; and meet me in the evening, and I'll give you an answer to this. So, hussy, take a kiss before-hand, to put you in mind.

[*Kisses her.*

Lucy. O lud, Sir Lucius! I never seed such a gemman! My lady won't like you if you are so impudent.

Sir Luc. Faith, she will, Lucy; that same—pho! what's the name of it?—modesty—is a quality in a lover more praised by the women than liked; so, if your mistress asks you whether Sir Lucius ever gave you a kiss, tell her fifty, my dear.

Lucy. What, would you have me tell her a lie?

Sir Luc. Ah, then, you baggage, I'll make it a truth presently.

Lucy. For shame, now! here is some one coming.

Sir Luc. O, faith, I'll quiet your conscience! [*Sees* FAG. *Exit, humming a tune.*

Enter FAG.

Fag. So, so, madam! I humbly beg pardon.

Lucy. O lud! now, Mr Fag—you flurry one so.

Fag. Come, come, Lucy; here's no one by—so a little less simplicity, with a grain or two more sincerity, if you please. You play false with us, madam. I saw you give the baronet a letter. My master shall know this; and if he don't call him out, I will.

Lucy. Ha, ha, ha! you gentlemen's gentlemen are so hasty. That letter was from Mrs Malaprop, simpleton. She is taken with Sir Lucius's address.

Fag. How! what tastes some people have! Why, I suppose I have walked by her window an hundred times. But what says your young lady? Any message to my master?

Lucy. Sad news, Mr Fag! A worse rival than Acres! Sir Anthony Absolute has proposed his son.

Fag. What! Captain Absolute?

Lucy. Even so—I overheard it all.

Fag. Ha, ha, ha! very good, faith! Good bye, Lucy; I must away with this news.

Lucy. Well; you may laugh; but it is true, I assure you. [*Going.*] But, Mr Fag, tell your master not to be cast down by this.

Fag. O, he'll be so disconsolate!

Lucy. And charge him not to think of quarrelling with young Absolute.

Fag. Never fear! never fear!

Lucy. Be sure; bid him keep up his spirits.

Fag. We will——we will.

[*Exeunt severally.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The North Parade.*

Enter ABSOLUTE.

Abs. 'Tis just as Fag told me, indeed. Whimsical enough, faith! My father wants to force me to marry the very girl I am plotting to run away with. He must not know of my connection with her yet a while. He has too summary a method of proceeding in these matters. However, I'll read my recantation instantly. My conversion is something sudden, indeed; but I can assure him it is very sincere. So, so, here he comes. He looks plaguy gruff. [*Steps aside.*

Enter Sir ANTHONY.

Sir Anth. No: I'll die sooner than forgive him! Die, did I say? I'll live these fifty years to plague him. At our last meeting, his impudence had almost put me out of temper. An obstinate, passionate, self-willed boy! Who can he take after? This is my return for getting him before all his brothers and sisters! for putting him, at twelve years old, into a marching regiment, and allowing him fifty pounds a-year, besides his pay, ever since! But I have done with him; he's any body's son for me. I never will see him more; never, never, never, never!

Abs. Now for a penitential face.

Sir Anth. Fellow, get out of my way!

Abs. Sir, you see a penitent before you.

Sir Anth. I see an impudent scoundrel before me.

Abs. A sincere penitent. I come, sir, to acknowledge my error, and to submit entirely to your will.

Sir Anth. What's that?

Abs. I have been revolving, and reflecting, and considering on your past goodness, and kindness, and condescension to me.

Sir Anth. Well, sir?

Abs. I have been likewise weighing and balancing what you were pleased to mention concerning duty, and obedience, and authority.

Sir Anth. Well, puppy!

Abs. Why, then, sir, the result of my reflections is, a resolution to sacrifice every inclination of my own to your satisfaction.

Sir Anth. Why now, you talk sense—absolute sense. I never heard any thing more sensible in my life. Confound you! you shall be Jack again!

Abs. I am happy in the appellation.

Sir Anth. Why, then, Jack, my dear Jack, I will now inform you who the lady really is.—— Nothing but your passion and violence, you silly fellow, prevented my telling you at first. Prepare, Jack, for wonder and rapture—prepare! What think you of Miss Lydia Languish?

Abs. Languish! What, the Languishes of Worcestershire?

Sir Anth. Worcestershire! No. Did you never meet Mrs Malaprop and her niece, Miss Languish, who came into our country just before you were last ordered to your regiment?

Abs. Malaprop! Languish! I don't remember ever to have heard the names before. Yet, stay! I think I do recollect something. Languish! Languish! She squints, don't she? A little red-haired girl?

Sir Anth. Squints! A red-haired girl!——— Zounds! no.

Abs. Then I must have forgot; it cann't be the same person.

Sir Anth. Jack! Jack! what think you of blooming, love-breathing seventeen?

Abs. As to that, sir, I am quite indifferent. If I can please you in the matter, 'tis all I desire.

Sir Anth. Nay, but, Jack, such eyes! such eyes! so innocently wild! so bashfully irresolute! not a glance but speaks and kindles some thought of love! Then, Jack, her cheeks! her cheeks, Jack! so deeply blushing at the insinuations of her tell-tale eyes! Then, Jack, her lips! O, Jack, lips smiling at their own discretion; and, if not smiling, more sweetly pouting; more lovely in sullenness!

Abs. That's she, indeed. Well done, old gentleman. [*Aside.*

Sir Anth. Then, Jack, her neck! O, Jack! Jack!

Abs. And which is to be mine, sir; the niece or the aunt?

Sir Anth. Why, you unfeeling, insensible puppy, I despise you! when I was of your age, such a description would have made me fly like a rocket! The aunt indeed! Odds life! when I ran away with your mother, I would not have touched any thing old or ugly to gain an empire.

Abs. Not to please your father, sir!

Sir Anth. To please my father! Zounds! not to please——Oh, my father——Odso! yes, yes; if my father, indeed, had desired—that's quite another matter. Though he was not the indulgent father that I am, Jack.

Abs. I dare say not, sir.

Sir Anth. But, Jack, you are not sorry to find your mistress is so beautiful?

Abs. Sir, I repeat it, if I please you in this affair, 'tis all I desire. Not that I think a woman the worse for being handsome; but, sir, if you please to recollect, you before hinted something about a hump or two, one eye, and a few more graces of that kind. Now, without being very nice, I own I should rather choose a wife of mine to have the usual number of limbs, and a limited quantity of back: and though one eye

may be very agreeable, yet, as the prejudice has always run in favour of two, I would not wish to affect a singularity in that article.

Sir Anth. What a phlegmatic sot it is! Why, sirrah, you're an anchorite! a vile, insensible stock! You a soldier! you're a walking block, fit only to dust the company's regimentals on! Odds life! I've a great mind to marry the girl myself!

Abs. I am entirely at your disposal, sir; if you should think of addressing Miss Languish yourself, I suppose you would have me marry the aunt; or, if you should change your mind, and take the old lady, 'tis the same to me, I'll marry the niece.

Sir Anth. Upon my word, Jack, thou'rt either a very great hypocrite, or——but come, I know your indifference on such a subject must be all a lie—I'm sure it must—come, now—damn your demure face! Come, confess, Jack; you have been lying, ha'n't you? You have been playing the hypocrite, hey? I'll never forgive you, if you ha'n't been lying, and playing the hypocrite.

Abs. I'm sorry, sir, that the respect and duty which I bear to you should be so mistaken.

Sir Anth. Hang your respect and duty! But come along with me; I'll write a note to Mrs Malaprop, and you shall visit the lady directly. Her eyes shall be the Promethian torch to you—— Come along! I'll never forgive you if you don't come back stark mad with rapture and impatience——if you don't, egad, I'll marry the girl myself! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—JULIA'S *Dressing-Room.*

Enter FAULKLAND.

Faulk. They told me Julia would return directly; I wonder she is not yet come! How mean does this captious, unsatisfied temper of mine appear to my cooler judgment! Yet I know not that I indulge it in any other point: but on this one subject, and to this one subject, whom I think I love beyond my life, I am ever ungenerously fretful and madly capricious! I am conscious of it; yet I cannot correct myself! What tender, honest joy sparkled in her eyes when we met! How delicate was the warmth of her expressions! I was ashamed to appear less happy, though I had come resolved to wear a face of coolness and upbraiding. Sir Anthony's presence prevented my proposed expostulations: yet I must be satisfied that she has not been so very happy in my absence. She is coming! Yes! I know the nimbleness of her tread, when she thinks her impatient Faulkland counts the moments of her stay.

Enter JULIA.

Julia. I had not hoped to see you again so soon.

Faulk. Could I, Julia, be contented with my first welcome, restrained as we were by the presence of a third person?

Julia. O, Faulkland, when your kindness can make me thus happy, let me not think that I discovered something of coldness in your first salutation!

Faulk. 'Twas but your fancy, Julia. I was rejoiced to see you—to see you in such health. Sure I had no cause for coldness?

Julia. Nay, then, I see you have taken something ill. You must not conceal from me what it is.

Faulk. Well then—shall I own to you that my joy at hearing of your health and arrival here, by your neighbour Acres, was somewhat damped by his dwelling much on the high spirits you had enjoyed in Devonshire—on your mirth, your singing, dancing, and I know not what!—For such is my temper, Julia, that I should regard every mirthful moment in your absence as a treason to constancy: The mutual tear that steals down the cheek of parting lovers is a compact, that no smile shall live there till they meet again.

Julia. Must I never cease to tax my Faulkland with this teasing, minute caprice? Can the idle reports of a silly boor weigh in your breast against my tried affection?

Faulk. They have no weight with me, Julia: No, no; I am happy if you have been so. Yet only say that you did not sing with mirth; say that you thought of Faulkland in the dance!

Julia. I never can be happy in your absence! If I wear a countenance of content, it is to shew that my mind holds no doubt of my Faulkland's truth. If I seemed sad, it were to make malice triumph, and say that I had fixed my heart on one who left me to lament his roving, and my own credulity. Believe me, Faulkland, I mean not to upbraid you when I say, that I have often dressed sorrow in smiles, lest my friends should guess whose unkindness had caused my tears.

Faulk. You were ever all goodness to me! O, I am a brute, when I but admit a doubt of your true constancy!

Julia. If ever, without such cause from you, as I will not suppose possible, you find my affection veering but a point, may I become a proverbial scoff for levity and base ingratitude!

Faulk. Ah, Julia, that last word is grating to me! I would I had no title to your gratitude! Search your heart, Julia; perhaps, what you have mistaken for love, is but the warm effusion of a too thankful heart!

Julia. For what quality must I love you?

Faulk. For no quality! To regard me for any quality of mind or understanding, were only to esteem me. And for person—I have often wished myself deformed, to be convinced that I owed no obligation there for any part of your affection.

Julia. Where nature has bestowed a show of nice attention in the features of a man, he should laugh at it as misplaced. I have seen men, who, in this vain article, perhaps, might rank above you; but my heart has never asked my eyes if it were so or not.

Faulk. Now this is not well from you, Julia;

I despise person in a man—yet, if you loved me as I wish, though I were an Æthiop, you'd think none so fair.

Julia. I see you are determined to be unkind. The contract which my poor father bound us in, gives you more than a lover's privilege.

Faulk. Again, Julia, you raise ideas that feed and justify my doubts. I would not have been more free—no! I am proud of my restraint. Yet, yet—perhaps your high respect alone for this solemn compact has fettered your inclinations, which, else, had made a worthier choice. How shall I be sure, had you remained unbound in thought and promise, that I should still have been the object of your persevering love?

Julia. Then try me now. Let us be free as strangers as to what is past: my heart will not feel more liberty.

Faulk. There now! So hasty, Julia! So anxious to be free! If your love for me were fixed and ardent, you would not lose your hold, even though I wished it!

Julia. Oh, you torture me to the heart! I cannot bear it.

Faulk. I do not mean to distress you. If I loved you less, I should never give you an uneasy moment. But hear me. All my fretful doubts arise from this. Women are not used to weigh and separate the motives of their affections: the cold dictates of prudence, gratitude, or filial duty, may sometimes be mistaken for the pleadings of the heart. I would not boast; yet let me say, that I have neither age, person, or character, to found dislike on; my fortune such as few ladies could be charged with indiscretion in the match. O, Julia! when love receives such countenance from prudence, nice minds will be suspicious of its birth.

Julia. I know not whither your insinuations would tend: but as they seem pressing to insult me, I will spare you the regret of having done so. I have given you no cause for this!

[*Exit in tears.*

Faulk. In tears! Stay, Julia: stay but for a moment. The door is fastened! Julia; my soul—but for one moment: I hear her sobbing! 'Sdeath! What a brute am I to use her thus! Yet stay. Ay; she is coming now: How little resolution there is in woman! How a few soft words can turn them! No, faith! She is not coming, either. Why, Julia! my love! say but that you forgive me; come but to tell me that; now this is being too resentful: stay! she is coming too; I thought she would: no steadiness in any thing! Her going away must have been a mere trick, then; she sha'n't see that I was hurt by it. I'll affect indifference—[*Hums a tune; then listens.*]—No; zounds! She is not coming! Nor don't intend it, I suppose. This is not steadiness, but obstinacy. Yet I deserve it. What, after so long an absence, to quarrel with her tenderness! 'Twas barbarous and unmanly! I should be ashamed to see her now. I'll wait till her just resentment is abated; and when I distress her so again, may I lose her for ever! And be linked, instead, to some antique virago, whose gnawing passions, and long-hoarded spleen, shall make me curse my folly half the day, and all the night. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Mrs* MALAPROP'S *Lodgings.*

Enter Mrs MALAPROP, *with a letter in her hand, and Captain* ABSOLUTE.

Mrs Mal. Your being Sir Anthony's son, captain, would itself be a sufficient accommodation; but, from the ingenuity of your appearance, I am convinced you deserve the character here given of you.

Abs. Permit me to say, madam, that, as I never yet have had the pleasure of seeing Miss Languish, my principal inducement, in this affair, at present, is the honour of being allied to Mrs Malaprop; of whose intellectual accomplishments, elegant manners, and unaffected learning, no tongue is silent.

Mrs Mal. Sir, you do me infinite honour! I beg, captain, you'll be seated.—[*Sit.*]—Ah! few gentlemen, now-a-days, know how to value the ineffectual qualities in a woman! Few think how a little knowledge becomes a gentlewoman! Men have no sense now, but for the worthless flower of beauty!

Abs. It is but too true, indeed, madam; yet I fear our ladies should share the blame: they think our admiration of beauty so great, that knowledge in them would be superfluous. Thus, like garden trees, they seldom shew fruit, till time has robbed them of the more specious blossom. Few, like Mrs Malaprop and the orange-tree, are rich in both at once!

Mrs Mal. Sir, you overpower me with good-breeding; he is the very pine-apple of politeness. You are not ignorant, captain, that this giddy girl has somehow contrived to fix her affections on a beggarly, strolling, eve's-dropping ensign, whom none of us have seen, and nobody knows any thing of.

Abs. O, I have heard the silly affair before.—I am not at all prejudiced against her on that account.

Mrs Mal. You are very good, and very considerate, captain. I am sure I have done every thing in my power, since I exploded the affair; long ago I laid my positive conjunctions on her, never to think on the fellow again. I have since laid Sir Anthony's preposition before her; but, I am sorry to say, she seems resolved to decline every particle that I enjoin her.

Abs. It must be very distressing, indeed, madam.

Mrs Mal. Oh! it gives me the hydrostatics to such a degree! I thought she had persisted from corresponding with him; but, behold, this very day, I have interceded another letter from the fellow; I believe I have it in my pocket.

Abs. O, the devil! my last note. [*Aside.*

Mrs Mal. Ay; here it is.

Abs. Ay; my note indeed! O the little traitress Lucy! [*Aside.*

Mrs Mal. There; perhaps you may know the writing. [*Gives him the letter.*

Abs. I think I have seen the hand before; yes, I certainly must have seen this hand before——

Mrs Mal. Nay; but read it, captain.

Abs. [*Reads.*]—'My soul's idol; my adored Lydia!' very tender, indeed!

Mrs Mal. Tender! ay, and profane, too, o' my conscience!

Abs. 'I am excessively alarmed at the intelligence you send me; the more so, as my new rival'——

Mrs Mal. That's you, sir.

Abs. 'Has universally the character of being an accomplished gentleman, and a man of honour.' Well, that's handsome enough.

Mrs Mal. O, the fellow has some design in writing so.

Abs. That he had; I'll answer for him, madam.

Mrs Mal. But go on, sir; you'll see presently.

Abs. 'As for the old weather-beaten she-dragon who guards you,'—Who can he mean by that?

Mrs Mal. Me, sir: me: he means me there: what do you think, now? But go on a little further.

Abs. Impudent scoundrel!—'It shall go hard but I will elude her vigilance, as I am told that the same ridiculous vanity which makes her dress up her coarse features, and deck her dull chat with hard words which she don't understand'——

Mrs Mal. There, sir! an attack upon my language! What do you think of that? An aspersion upon my parts of speech! Was ever such a brute! Sure, if I reprehend any thing in this world, it is the use of my oracular tongue, and a nice derangement of epitaphs!

Abs. He deserves to be hanged and quartered! Let me see—'same ridiculous vanity'——

Mrs Mal. You need not read it again, sir.

Abs. I beg pardon, madam—'does also lay her open to the grossest deceptions from flattery and pretended admiration;'—an impudent coxcomb!—'so that I have a scheme to see you shortly with the old harridan's consent, and even to make her a go-between in our interview.'—Was ever such assurance!

Mrs Mal. Did you ever hear any thing like it? He'll elude my vigilance, will he—yes, yes! Ha, ha! he's very likely to enter these doors! We'll try who can plot best!

Abs. So we will, madam; so we will. Ha, ha, ha! a conceited puppy, ha, ha, ha! Well, but, Mrs Malaprop, as the girl seems so infatuated by this fellow, suppose you were to wink at her corresponding with him for a little time—let her even plot an elopement with him—then do you connive at her escape—while I, just in the nick, will have the fellow laid by the heels, and fairly contrive to carry her off in his stead!

Mrs Mal. I am delighted with the scheme! never was any thing better perpetrated!

Abs. But, pray, could not I see the lady for a few minutes now? I should like to try her temper a little.

Mrs Mal. Why, I don't know: I doubt she is not prepared for a visit of this kind. There is a decorum in these matters.

Abs. O Lord! she won't mind me; only tell her Beverley——

Mrs Mal. Sir?

Abs. Gently, good tongue! [*Aside.*

Mrs Mal. What did you say of Beverley?

Abs. O, I was going to propose that you should tell her, by way of jest, that it was Beverley who was below; she'd come down fast enough then—ha, ha, ha!

Mrs Mal. 'Twould be a trick she well deserves; besides, you know the fellow tells her he'll get my consent to her; ha, ha! Let him, if he can, I say again.—Lydia, come down here!—[*Calling.*]—He'll make me a go-between in their interviews! Ha, ha, ha! Come down, I say, Lydia! I don't wonder at your laughing; ha, ha, ha! His impudence is truly ridiculous.

Abs. 'Tis very ridiculous, upon my soul, madam! ha, ha, ha!

Mrs Mal. The little hussy won't hear. Well, I'll go and tell her at once who it is; she shall know that Captain Absolute is come to wait on her. And I'll make her behave as becomes a young woman.

Abs. As you please, madam.

Mrs Mal. For the present, captain, your servant. Ah! you've not done laughing yet, I see: elude my vigilance! yes, yes; ha, ha, ha! [*Exit Mrs* MAL.

Abs. Ha, ha, ha! One would think, now, that I might throw off all disguise at once, and seize my prize with security; but such is Lydia's caprice, that to undeceive were probably to lose her. I'll see whether she knows me.

[*Walks aside, and seems engaged in looking at the pictures.*

Enter LYDIA.

Lydia. What a scene am I now to go through! Surely nothing can be more dreadful than to be obliged to listen to the loathsome addresses of a stranger to one's heart. I have heard of girls, persecuted as I am, who have appealed, in behalf of their favoured lover, to the generosity of his rival; suppose I were to try it—there stands the hated rival—an officer, too! But O how unlike my Beverley! I wonder he don't begin; truly, he seems a very negligent wooer! Quite at his ease, upon my word! I'll speak first.—Mr Absolute!

Abs. Madam. [*Turns round.*

Lydia. O Heavens! Beverley!

Abs. Hush! hush, my life! softly! be not surprised!

Lydia. I am so astonished! and so terrified! and so overjoyed!——for Heaven's sake! how came you here?

Abs. Briefly——I have deceived your aunt—I was informed that my new rival was to visit

here this evening; and, contriving to have him kept away, have passed myself on her for Captain Absolute.

Lydia. O charming!——and she really takes you for young Absolute?

Abs. O, she's convinced of it!

Lydia. Ha, ha, ha! I cann't forbear laughing to think how her sagacity is over-reached!

Abs. But we trifle with our precious moments ——such another opportunity may not occur—then let me now conjure my kind, my condescending angel to fix the time when I may rescue her from undeserving persecution, and, with a licenced warmth, plead for my reward.

Lydia. Will you, then, Beverley, consent to forfeit that portion of my paltry wealth? that burden on the wings of love?

Abs. O, come to me—rich only thus—in loveliness!——Bring no portion to me but thy love—'twill be generous in you, Lydia—for well you know it is the only dower your poor Beverley can repay.

Lydia. How persuasive are his words!—how charming will poverty be with him! [*Aside.*

Abs. Ah! my soul, what a life will we then live! Love shall be our idol and support! we will worship him with a monastic strictness; abjuring all worldly toys, to centre every thought and action there! Proud of calamity, we will enjoy the wreck of wealth; while the surrounding gloom of adversity shall make the flame of our pure love shew doubly bright. By Heavens! I would fling all goods of fortune from me with a prodigal hand, to enjoy the scene where I might clasp my Lydia to my bosom, and say, the world affords no smile to me—but here——[*Embracing her.*] If she holds out now, the devil is in it!

Lydia. Now could I fly with him to the Antipodes! but my persecution is not yet come to a crisis.

Enter Mrs MALAPROP, *listening.*

Mrs Mal. I am impatient to know how the little hussy deports herself. [*Aside.*

Abs. So pensive, Lydia!—Is, then, your warmth abated?

Mrs Mal. Warmth abated!—so she has been in a passion, I suppose?

Lydia. No—nor ever can, while I have life.

Mrs Mal. An ill-tempered little devil! She'll be in a passion all her life——will she?

Lydia. Think not the idle threats of my ridiculous aunt can ever have any weight with me.

Mrs Mal. Very dutiful, upon my word!

Lydia. Let her choice be Captain Absolute, but Beverley is mine.

Mrs Mal. I am astonished at her assurance! To his face!—this to his face!

Abs. Thus, then, let me enforce my suit. [*Kneeling.*

Mrs Mal. Ay, poor young man!—down on his knees entreating for pity!——I can contain no longer.—Why, thou vixen! I have overheard you!

Abs. O, confound her vigilance! [*Aside.*

Mrs Mal. Captain Absolute, I know not how to apologize for her shocking rudeness.

Abs. So—all's safe, I find. [*Aside.*]——I have hopes, madam, that time will bring the young lady——

Mrs Mal. O, there's nothing to be hoped for from her—she's as headstrong as an allegory on the banks of Nile!

Lydia. Nay, madam; what do you charge me with now?

Mrs Mal. Why, thou unblushing rebel! did not you tell this gentleman, to his face, that you loved another better! did not you say you never would be his?

Lydia. No, madam, I did not.

Mrs Mal. Good Heavens! what assurance! Lydia, Lydia, you ought to know that lying don't become a young woman! Did not you boast that Beverley—that stroller Beverley, possessed your heart? Tell me that, I say!

Lydia. 'Tis true, madam, and none but Beverley!

Mrs Mal. Hold! hold, assurance! you shall not be so rude.

Abs. Nay, pray, Mrs Malaprop, don't stop the young lady's speech: she's very welcome to talk thus—it does not hurt me in the least, I assure you.

Mrs Mal. You are too good, captain—too amiably patient—but come with me, miss.——Let us see you again soon, captain—remember what we have fixed.

Abs. I shall, madam.

Mrs Mal. Come, take a graceful leave of the gentleman.

Lydia. May every blessing wait on my Beverley, my loved Bev——

Mrs Mal. Hussy! I'll choak the word in your throat!—Come along, come along!

[*Exeunt severally*—ABSOLUTE *kissing his hand to* LYDIA—*Mrs* MALAPROP *stopping her from speaking.*

SCENE IV.—ACRES'S *Lodgings.*

ACRES *and* DAVID.—ACRES, *as just dressed.*

Acres. Indeed, David! do you think I become it so?

David. You are quite another creature, believe me, master, by the mass! an' we've any luck, we shall see the Devon monkerony in all the print-shops in Bath.

Acres. Dress does make a difference, David.

David. 'Tis all in all, I think—difference! why, an' you were to go now to Clod-Hall, I am certain the old lady wouldn't know you; Master Butler wouldn't believe his own eyes; and Mrs Pickle would cry, 'Lard preserve me!' our dairy-maid would come giggling to the door; and I warrant Dolly Tester, your honour's favourite, would blush like my waistcoat!——Oons! I'll hold a gallon, there an't a dog in the house but would bark; and I question whether Phillis would wag a hair of her tail!

Acres. Ay, David, there's nothing like polishing.

David. So I says of your honour's boots; but the boy never heeds me!

Acres. But, David, has Mr De-la-grace been here? I must rub up my balancing, and chasing, and boring.

David. I'll call again, sir.

Acres. Do—and see if there are any letters for me at the post-office.

David. I will. By the mass, I can't help looking at your head! If I hadn't been by at the cooking, I wish I may die if I should have known the dish again myself! [*Exit.*

ACRES *comes forward, practising a dancing step.*

Acres. Sink, slide—coupee—Confound the first inventors of cotillions, say I!—they are as bad as algebra to us country gentlemen—I can walk a minuet easy enough, when I am forced—and I have been accounted a good stick in a country-dance.——Odds jiggs and tabors!—I never valued your cross-over to couple—figure in—right and left—and I'd foot it with e'er a captain in the county!—but these outlandish heathen allemandes and cotillions are quite beyond me!——I shall never prosper at them, that's sure—mine are true-born English legs—they don't understand their curs'd French lingo!—their *pas* this, and *pas* that, and *pas* t'other! Damn me! my feet don't like to be called paws! no, 'tis certain I have most antigallican toes!

Enter Servant.

Serv. Here is Sir Lucius O'Trigger to wait on you, sir.

Acres. Shew him in.

Enter Sir LUCIUS.

Sir Luc. Mr Acres, I am delighted to embrace you.

Acres. My dear Sir Lucius, I kiss your hands.

Sir Luc. Pray, my friend, what has brought you so suddenly to Bath?

Acres. Faith! I have followed Cupid's jack-a-lantern, and find myself in a quagmire at last! In short, I have been very ill-used, Sir Lucius. I don't choose to mention names; but look on me as on a very ill-used gentleman.

Sir Luc. Pray, what is the case? I ask no names.

Acres. Mark me, Sir Lucius: I fall as deep as need be in love with a young lady—her friends take my part—I follow her to Bath—send word of my arrival—and receive answer, that the lady is to be otherwise disposed of! This, Sir Lucius, I call being ill used.

Sir Luc. Very ill, upon my conscience! Pray, can you divine the cause of it?

Acres. Why, there's the matter; she has another lover, one Beverley, who, I am told, is now in Bath.—Odds slanders and lies! he must be at the bottom of it!

Sir Luc. A rival in the case, is there? And you think he has supplanted you unfairly?

Acres. Unfairly! to be sure he has. He never could have done it fairly.

Sir Luc. Then, sure you know what is to be done?

Acres. Not I, upon my soul!

Sir Luc. We wear no swords here; but——you understand me?

Acres. What! fight him?

Sir Luc. Ay, to be sure; what can I mean else?

Acres. But he has given me no provocation.

Sir Luc. Now, I think he has given you the greatest provocation in the world. Can a man commit a more heinous offence against another, than to fall in love with the same woman? O, by my soul! it is the most unpardonable breach of friendship.

Acres. Breach of friendship! Ay, ay; but I have no acquaintance with this man: I never saw him in my life.

Sir Luc. That's no argument at all; he has the less right, then, to take such a liberty.

Acres. Gad! that's true—I grow full of anger, Sir Lucius! I fire apace! Odds hilts and blades! I find a man may have a deal of valour in him, and not know it! But couldn't I contrive to have a little right of my side?

Sir Luc. What the devil signifies right, when your honour is concerned? Do you think Achilles, or my little Alexander the Great, ever inquired where the right lay? No, by my soul! they drew their broad swords, and left the lazy sons of peace to settle the justice of it.

Acres. Your words are a grenadier's march to my heart! I believe courage must be catching! I certainly do feel a kind of valour rising, as it were—a kind of courage, as I may say——Odds flints, pans, and triggers! I'll challenge him directly.

Sir Luc. Ah, my little friend! if I had Blunderbuss-hall here—I could show you a range of ancestry, in the O'Trigger line, that would furnish the new room! every one of whom had killed his man! For though the mansion-house and dirty acres have slipt through my fingers, I thank Heaven, our honour and the family-pictures are as fresh as ever!

Acres. O, Sir Lucius, I have had ancestors, too! —every man of them colonel or captain in the militia!——Odds balls and barrels! say no more —I'm braced for it!—The thunder of your words has soured the milk of human kindness in my breast!——Zounds! as the man in the play says, 'I could do such deeds'——

Sir Luc. Come, come; there must be no passion at all in the case—these things should always be done civilly.

Acres. I must be in a passion, Sir Lucius——I must be in a rage.—Dear Sir Lucius, let me be in a rage, if you love me.—Come, here's pen and paper. [*Sits down to write.*] I would the ink were red!—Indite, I say, indite!—How shall I begin? Odds bullets and blades! I'll write a good bold hand, however.

Sir Luc. Pray, compose yourself.

Acres. Come—now, shall I begin with an oath? Do, Sir Lucius, let me begin with a damme!

Sir Luc. Pho, pho! do the thing decently, and like a Christian. Begin now—'Sir'——

Acres. That's too civil by half.

Sir Luc. 'To prevent the confusion that might arise'——

Acres. Well——

Sir Luc. 'From our both addressing the same lady'——

Acres. Ay; there's the reason—'same lady'—Well——

Sir Luc. 'I shall expect the honour of your company'——

Acres. Zounds! I'm not asking him to dinner!

Sir Luc. Pray, be easy.

Acres. Well, then—'honour of your company'——

Sir Luc. 'To settle our pretensions'——

Acres. Well.

Sir Luc. Let me see; ay, King's Mead-fields will do——'in King's Mead-fields.'

Acres. So, that's done.——Well, I'll fold it up presently; my own crest——a hand and dagger shall be the seal.

Sir Luc. You see, now, this little explanation will put a stop, at once, to all confusion or misunderstanding that might arise between you.

Acres. Ay, we fight to prevent any misunderstanding.

Sir Luc. Now, I'll leave you to fix your own time. Take my advice, and you'll decide it this evening, if you can; then let the worst come of it, 'twill be off your mind to-morrow.

Acres. Very true.

Sir Luc. So I shall see nothing more of you, unless it be by letter, till the evening. I would do myself the honour to carry your message; but, to tell you a secret, I believe I shall have just such another affair on my own hands. There is a gay captain here, who put a jest on me lately, at the expence of my country, and I only want to fall in with the gentleman, to call him out.

Acres. By my valour, I should like to see you fight first! Odds life! I should like to see you kill him, if it was only to get a little lesson.

Sir Luc. I shall be very proud of instructing you——Well, for the present—but remember now, when you meet your antagonist, do every thing in a mild and agreeable manner. Let your courage be as keen, but, at the same time, as polished as your sword. [*Exeunt severally.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—ACRES'S *Lodgings.*

Enter ACRES *and* DAVID.

David. Then, by the mass, sir, I would do no such thing!—ne'er a Sir Lucius O'Trigger in the kingdom should make me fight, when I wa'n't so minded. Oons! what will the old lady say, when she hears o't?

Acres. Ah! David, if you had heard Sir Lucius! Odds sparks and flames! he would have roused your valour.

David. Not he, indeed. I hates such bloodthirsty cormorants. Look'ee, master, if you'd wanted a bout at boxing, quarter-staff, or short-staff, I should never be the man to bid you cry off: But for your curs'd sharps and snaps, I never knew any good come of them.

Acres. But my honour, David, my honour! I must be very careful of my honour.

David. Ay, by the mass! and I would be very careful of it; and I think, in return, my honour couldn't do less than to be very careful of me.

Acres. Odds blades, David! no gentleman will ever risk the loss of his honour!

David. I say, then, it would be but civil in honour never to risk the loss of a gentleman——Look'ee, master, this honour seems to me to be a marvellous false friend! ay, truly, a very courtier-like servant!—Put the case I was a gentleman (which, thank God! no one can say of me;) well, my honour makes me quarrel with another gentleman of my acquaintance.——So, we fight, (Pleasant enough that!) Boh! I kill him! (the more's my luck.) Now, pray, who gets the profit of it? Why, my honour!—But put the case that he kills me!——By the mass! I go to the worms, and my honour whips over to my enemy!

Acres. No, David—in that case! Odds crowns and laurels! your honour follows you to the grave.

David. Now, that's just the place where I could make a shift to do without it.

Acres. Zounds! David, you are a coward! It doesn't become my valour to listen to you. What, shall I disgrace my ancestors? Think of that, David; think what it would be to disgrace my ancestors!

David. Under favour, the surest way of not disgracing them, is to keep as long as you can out of their company. Look'ee now, master, to go to them in such haste, with an ounce of lead in your brains, I should think might as well be let alone. Our ancestors are very good kind of folks; but they are the last people I should choose to have a visiting acquaintance with.

Acres. But, David, now, you don't think there is such very, very, very, very great danger! hey? Odds life! people often fight without any mischief done!

David. By the mass, I think 'tis ten to one against you!—Oons! here you're to meet some

lion-headed fellow, I warrant, with his damned double-barrelled swords, and cut-and-thrust pistols! Lord bless us! it makes me tremble to think o't! Those be such desperate bloody-minded weapons! Well, I never could abide them! from a child I never could fancy them! I suppose there a'n't been so merciless a beast in the world as your loaded pistol!

Acres. Zounds! I won't be afraid—Odds fire and fury! you sha'n't make me afraid——Here is the challenge, and I have sent for my dear friend Jack Absolute to carry it for me.

David. Ay, in the name of mischief, let him be the messenger.—For my part, I wouldn't lend a hand to it for the best horse in your stable. By the mass! it don't look like another letter! It is, as I may say, a designing and malicious-looking letter, and, I warrant, smells of gunpowder like a soldier's pouch!—Oons! I wouldn't swear it may'nt go off!

Acres. Out, you poltroon!—you ha'n't the valour of a grass-hopper.

David. Well, I say no more; 'twill be sad news, to be sure, at Clod-Hall! but I have done. How Phillis will howl when she hears of it!—Ay, poor bitch, she little thinks what shooting her master's going after! And I warrant old Crop, who has carried your honour, field and road, these ten years, will curse the hour he was born. [*Whimpering.*

Acres. It won't do, David—I am determined to fight—so get along, you coward, while I'm in the mind.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Captain Absolute, sir.

Acres. O! shew him up. [*Exit Servant.*

David. Well, Heaven send we be all alive this time to-morrow!

Acres. What's that?——Don't provoke me, David!

David. Good bye, master. [*Whimpering.*

Acres. Get along, you cowardly, dastardly, croaking raven. [*Exit* DAVID.

Enter ABSOLUTE.

Abs. What's the matter, Bob?

Acres. A vile sheep-hearted blockhead!—If I hadn't the valour of St George and the dragon to boot—

Abs. But what did you want with me, Bob?

Acres. O!—There—[*Gives him the challenge.*]

Abs. 'To Ensign Beverley.' So, what's going on now? [*Aside.*] Well, what's this?

Acres. A challenge.

Abs. Indeed!—Why, you won't fight him, will you, Bob?

Acres. 'Egad, but I will, Jack—Sir Lucius has wrought me to it. He has left me full of rage, and I'll fight this evening, that so much good passion mayn't be wasted.

Abs. But what have I to do with this?

Acres. Why, as I think you know something of this fellow, I want you to find him out for me, and give him this mortal defiance.

Abs. Well, give it to me, and trust me he gets it.

Acres. Thank you, my dear friend, my dear Jack; but it is giving you a great deal of trouble.

Abs. Not in the least; I beg you won't mention it.—No trouble in the world, I assure you.

Acres. You are very kind.—What it is to have a friend!—You couldn't be my second—could you, Jack?

Abs. Why, no, Bob, not in this affair; it would not be quite so proper.

Acres. Well, then, I must get my friend Sir Lucius. I shall have your good wishes, however, Jack.

Abs. Whenever he meets you, believe me.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir Anthony Absolute is below, inquiring for the captain.

Abs. I'll come instantly.—Well, my little hero, success attend you. [*Going.*

Acres. Stay, stay, Jack! If Beverley should ask you what kind of a man your friend Acres is, do tell him I am a devil of a fellow! will you, Jack?

Abs. To be sure I shall.—I'll say you are a determined dog! hey, Bob?

Acres. Ay, do, do, do; and if that frightens him, 'egad, perhaps he mayn't come. So tell him I generally kill a man a-week; will you, Jack?

Abs. I will, I will; I'll say you are called in the country, Fighting Bob.

Acres. Right, right; 'tis all to prevent mischief; for I don't want to take his life, if I clear my honour.

Abs. No! that's very kind of you.

Acres. Why, you don't wish me to kill him? do you, Jack?

Abs. No, upon my soul, I do not.——But a devil of a fellow, hey? [*Going.*

Acres. True, true; but stay—stay, Jack——you may add, that you never saw me in such a rage before; a most devouring rage!

Abs. I will, I will.

Acres. Remember, Jack—a determined dog!

Abs. Ay, ay; Fighting Bob!

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—*Mrs* MALAPROP'S *Lodgings.*

Mrs MALAPROP *and* LYDIA.

Mrs Mal. Why, thou perverse one! tell me what you can object to him? Isn't he a handsome man? tell me that—A genteel man? a pretty figure of a man?

Lydia. She little thinks whom she is praising! [*Aside.*]—So is Beverley, madam.

Mrs Mal. No caparisons, miss, if you please.—Caparisons don't become a young woman—No! Captain Absolute is, indeed, a fine gentle man!

Lydia. Ay the Captain Absolute you have seen. [*Aside.*

Mrs Mal. Then he's so well bred; so full of alacrity and adulation!—and has so much to say for himself:—in such good language, too!—His physiognomy so grammatical:—Then his presence is so noble: I protest, when I saw him, I thought of what Hamlet says in the play:—'Hesperian curls—the front of Job himself!—an eye like March, to threaten at command!—a station, like Harry Mercury, new'—Something about kissing—on a hill—however, the similitude struck me directly.

Lydia. How enraged she'll be presently, when she discovers her mistake!

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir Anthony and Captain Absolute are below, madam.

Mrs Mal. Shew them up here. [*Exit Servant.*] Now, Lydia, I insist on your behaving as becomes a young woman.—Shew your good breeding, at least, though you have forgot your duty.

Lydia. Madam, I have told you my resolution!—I shall not only give him no encouragement, but I won't even speak to, or look at him.

[*Flings herself into a chair, with her face from the door.*

Enter Sir ANTHONY *and* ABSOLUTE.

Sir Anth. Here we are, Mrs Malaprop, come to mitigate the frowns of unrelenting beauty; and difficulty enough I had to bring this fellow.—I don't know what's the matter; but, if I had not held him by force, he'd have given me the slip.

Mrs Mal. You have infinite trouble, Sir Anthony, in the affair.—I am ashamed for the cause! Lydia, Lydia, rise, I beseech you!—pay your respects! [*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. I hope, madam, that Miss Languish has reflected on the worth of this gentleman, and the regard due to her aunt's choice, and my alliance.—Now, Jack, speak to her. [*Aside to him.*

Abs. What the devil shall I do? [*Aside.*] You see, sir, she won't even look at me, whilst you are here. I knew she would not!—I told you so—Let me entreat you, sir, to leave us together!

[ABSOLUTE *seems to expostulate with his father.*

Lydia. [*Aside.*] I wonder I have not heard my aunt exclaim yet! sure she can't have looked at him!———perhaps their regimentals are alike, and she is something blind.

Sir Anth. I say, sir, I won't stir a foot yet.

Mrs Mal. I am sorry to say, Sir Anthony, that my affluence over my niece is very small.—Turn round, Lydia; I blush for you! [*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. May I not flatter myself that Miss Languish will assign what cause of dislike she can have to my son!—Why don't you begin, Jack?—Speak, you puppy—speak! [*Aside to him.*

Mrs Mal. It is impossible, Sir Anthony, she can have any.—She will not say she has.——— Answer, hussy! why don't you answer? [*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. Then, madam, I trust that a childish and hasty predilection will be no bar to Jack's happiness.———Zounds, sirrah, why don't you speak! [*Aside to him.*

Lydia. [*Aside.*] I think my lover seems as little inclined to conversation as myself.——How strangely blind my aunt must be!

Abs. Hem, hem! Madam, hem! [ABSOLUTE *attempts to speak, then returns to Sir* ANTHONY.] Faith, sir, I am so confounded! and so, so confused! I told you I should be so, sir; I knew it. The—the—tremor of my passion entirely takes away my presence of mind.

Sir Anth. But it don't take away your voice, fool, does it? Go up, and speak to her directly!

[ABSOLUTE *makes signs to Mrs* MALAPROP *to leave them together.*

Mrs Mal. Sir Anthony, shall we leave them together? Ah, you stubborn little vixen.

[*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. Not yet, madam, not yet! What the devil are you at? unlock your jaws, sirrah, or—

[*Aside to him.*

[ABSOLUTE *draws near* LYDIA.

Abs. Now Heaven send she may be too sullen to look round! I must disguise my voice. [*Aside. Speaks in a low hoarse tone.*] Will not Miss Languish lend an ear to the mild accents of true love? Will not——

Sir Anth. What the devil ails the fellow? Why don't you speak out? not stand croaking like a frog in a quinsey!

Abs. The—the—excess of my awe, and my—my—my modesty, quite choak me!

Sir Anth. Ah, your modesty again! I'll tell you what, Jack, if you don't speak out directly, and glibly, too, I shall be in such a rage! Mrs Malaprop, I wish the lady would favour us with something more than a side front.

[*Mrs* MALAPROP *seems to chide* LYDIA.

Abs. So all will out, I see! [*Goes up to* LYDIA *—speaks softly.*] Be not surprised, my Lydia; suppress all surprise at present.

Lydia. [*Aside.*] Heavens! 'tis Beverley's voice! Sure he can't have imposed on Sir Anthony too! [*Looks round by degrees, then starts up.*] Is this possible! my Beverley! how can this be, my Beverley?

Abs. Ah, 'tis all over! [*Aside.*

Sir Anth. Beverley! the devil! Beverley! What can the girl mean? This is my son, Jack Absolute.

Mrs Mal. For shame, hussy: for shame! your head runs so on that fellow, that you have him always in your eyes. Beg Captain Absolute's pardon directly.

Lydia. I see no Captain Absolute, but my loved Beverley!

Sir Anth. Zounds, the girl's mad! her brain's turned by reading!

Mrs Mal. O' my conscience, I believe so! What do you mean by Beverley, hussy? You saw Captain Absolute before to-day; there he is; your husband that shall be.

Lydia. With all my soul, madam! when I refuse my Beverley——

Sir Anth. O, she's as mad as Bedlam! or has this fellow been playing us a rogue's trick? Come here, sirrah; who the devil are you?

Abs. Faith, sir, I am not quite clear myself; but I'll endeavour to recollect.

Sir Anth. Are you my son, or not? Answer for your mother, you dog, if you won't for me.

Mrs Mal. Ay, sir, who are you? O mercy, I begin to suspect!

Abs. Ye powers of impudence, befriend me! [*Aside.*] Sir Anthony, most assuredly I am your wife's son; and that I sincerely believe myself to be yours also, I hope my duty has always shewn.—Mrs Malaprop, I am your most respectful admirer, and shall be proud to add affectionate nephew.—I need not tell my Lydia that she sees her faithful Beverley, who, knowing the singular generosity of her temper, assumed that name, and a station which has proved a test of the most disinterested love, which he now hopes to enjoy in a more elevated character.

Lydia. So there will be no elopement after all? [*Sullenly.*

Sir Anth. Upon my soul, Jack, thou art a very impudent fellow! To do you justice, I think I never saw a piece of more consummate assurance!

Abs. O, you flatter me, sir! your compliment —'tis my modesty, you know, sir; my modesty that has stood in my way.

Sir Anth. Well, I am glad you are not the dull, insensible varlet you pretended to be, however; I am glad you have made a fool of your father, you dog, I am: So this was your penitence, your duty, and obedience! I thought it was damned sudden! You never heard their names before, not you! What, the Languishes of Worcestershire, hey? If you could please me in the affair, 'twas all you desired! Ah, you dissembling villain! What! [*Pointing to* LYDIA] she squints, don't she? a little red-haired girl! hey? Why, you hypocritical young rascal! I wonder you are not ashamed to hold up your head!

Abs. 'Tis with difficulty, sir; I am confused —very much confused, as you must perceive.

Mrs Mal. O lud, Sir Anthony! a new light breaks in upon me! Hey! How! what! Captain, did you write the letters, then? What, am I to thank you for the elegant compilation of 'an old, weather-beaten she-dragon,' hey? O mercy! was it you that reflected on my parts of speech?

Abs. Dear sir, my modesty will be overpowered at last, if you don't assist me. I shall certainly not be able to stand it!

Sir Anth. Come, come, Mrs Malaprop, we must forget and forgive: odd's life! matters have taken so clever a turn all of a sudden, that I could find in my heart to be so good-humoured! and so gallant—hey! Mrs Malaprop?

Mrs Mal. Well, Sir Anthony, since you desire it, we will not anticipate the past; so mind, young people——our retrospection will be all to the future.

Sir Anth. Come, we must leave them together. Mrs Malaprop, they long to fly into each other's arms, I warrant. Jack, is not the cheek as I said, hey? and the eye, you rogue! and the lip! hey? Come, Mrs Malaprop, we'll not disturb their tenderness—their's is the time of life for happiness. [*Sings.*]

Youth's the season made for joy.

Hey! Odd's life! I'm in such spirits, I don't know what I could not do! Permit me, madam. [*Gives his hand to Mrs* MALAPROP.——*Sings.*] *Tol-de-rol.* Egad, I should like to have a little fooling myself. *Tol-de-rol! de-rol*—

[*Exit, singing and handing Mrs* MALAPROP.

[LYDIA *sits sullenly in her chair.*

Abs. So much thought bodes me no good. [*Aside.*

So grave, Lydia!

Lydia. Sir!

Abs. So! Egad, I thought as much! that damned monosyllable has froze me! [*Aside.*]—What, Lydia, now that we are as happy in our friends' consent, as in our mutual vows——

Lydia. Friends' consent, indeed! [*Peevishly.*

Abs. Come, come; we must lay aside some of our romance—a little wealth and comfort may be endured after all. And for your fortune, the lawyers shall make such settlements as———

Lydia. Lawyers! I hate lawyers!

Abs. Nay, then, we will not wait for their lingering forms, but instantly procure the licence, and——

Lydia. The licence! I hate a licence.

Abs. O, my love! be not so unkind! thus, let me entreat—— [*Kneeling.*

Lydia. Pshaw! what signifies kneeling, when you know I must have you.

Abs. [*Rising.*] Nay, madam, there shall be no constraint upon your inclinations, I promise you. If I have lost your heart, I resign the rest. 'Gad, I must try what a little spirit will do. [*Aside.*

Lydia. [*Rising.*] Then, sir, let me tell you, the interest you had there was acquired by a mean, unmanly imposition, and deserves the punishment of fraud. What, you have been treating me like a child! humouring my romance, and laughing, I suppose, at your success?

Abs. You wrong me, Lydia, you wrong me; only hear——

Lydia. So, while I fondly imagined we were deceiving my relations, and flattering myself that I should outwit and incense them all——behold, my hopes are to be crushed at once, by my aunt's consent and approbation; and I am, myself, the only dupe, at last! [*Walking about in a heat.*] But, here, sir; here is the picture; Beverley's picture! [*Taking a miniature from her bosom,*] which I have worn night and day, in spite of threats and entreaties. There, sir, [*Flings it to him,*] and be assured I throw the original from my heart as easily.

Abs. Nay, nay, madam; we will not differ as to that—Here, [*Taking out a picture,*] here is Miss Lydia Languish. What a difference! ay, there is the heavenly assenting smile, that first

gave soul and spirit to my hopes! those are the lips, which sealed a vow, as yet scarce dry in Cupid's calendar; and there, the half resentful blush, that would have checked the ardour of my thanks—Well, all that's past—all over, indeed. There, madam! in beauty, that copy is not equal to you; but, in my mind, its merit over the original, in being still the same, is such—that—I cannot find in my heart to part with it.

[*Puts it up again.*

Lydia. [*Softening.*] 'Tis your own doing, sir. I, I, I suppose you are perfectly satisfied?

Abs. O, most certainly! sure, now, this is much better than being in love—ha, ha, ha! there's some spirit in this! What signifies breaking some scores of solemn promises? all that is of no consequence, you know. To be sure, people will say that miss did not know her own mind—but never mind that; or, perhaps, they may be ill-natured enough to hint, that the gentleman grew tired of the lady, and forsook her—but don't let that fret you.

Lydia. There's no bearing this insolence.

[*Bursts into tears.*

Enter Mrs MALAPROP *and Sir* ANTHONY.

Mrs Mal. [*Entering.*] Come, we must interrupt your billing and cooing a while.

Lydia. This is worse than your treachery and deceit, you base ingrate! [*Sobbing.*

Sir Anth. What the devil's the matter now? Zounds, Mrs Malaprop, this is the oddest billing and cooing I ever heard! but what the deuce is the meaning of it? I am quite astonished!

Abs. Ask the lady, sir.

Mrs Mal. O, mercy, I am quite analysed, for my part! Why, Lydia, what is the reason of this?

Lydia. Ask the gentleman, madam.

Sir Anth. Zounds! I shall be in a phrenzy! Why, Jack, you are not come out to be any one else, are you?

Mrs Mal. Ay, sir, there's no more trick, is there? you are not like Cerberus, three gentlemen at once, are you?

Abs. You'll not let me speak—I say the lady can account for this much better than I can.

Lydia. Madam, you once commanded me never to think of Beverley again; there is the man; I now obey you; for, from this moment, I renounce him for ever. [*Exit* LYDIA.

Mrs Mal. O mercy and miracles! what a turn here is! why, sure, captain, you haven't behaved disrespectfully to my niece?

Sir Anth. Ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha! now I see it! Ha, ha, ha! now I see it! You have been too lively, Jack.

Abs. Nay, sir, upon my word!

Sir Anth. Come, no lying, Jack. I'm sure 'twas so.

Mrs Mal. O lud! Sir Anthony! O fie, captain!

Abs. Upon my soul, madam——

Sir Anth. Come, no excuses, Jack! why, your father, you rogue, was so before you: the blood of the Absolutes was always impatient! Ha, ha, ha! poor little Lydia! Why, you've frightened her, you dog, you have.

Abs. By all that's good, sir——

Sir Anth. Zounds! say no more, I tell you. Mrs Malaprop shall make your peace. You must make his peace, Mrs Malaprop: you must tell her 'tis Jack's way; tell her 'tis all our ways—it runs in the blood of our family! Come away, Jack—Ha, ha, ha! Mrs Malaprop—a young villain.

[*Pushes him out.*

Mrs Mal. O, Sir Anthony! O fie, captain!

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE IV.—*The North Parade.*

Enter Sir LUCIUS O'TRIGGER.

Sir Luc. I wonder where this Captain Absolute hides himself! Upon my conscience! these officers are always in one's way in love affairs: I remember I might have married Lady Dorothy Carmine, if it had not been for a little rogue of a major, who ran away with her before she could get a sight of me! And I wonder, too, what it is the ladies can see in them to be so fond of them; unless it be a touch of the old serpent in them, that makes the little creatures be caught, like vipers, with a bit of red cloth. Hah! isn't this the captain coming? faith it is! There is a probability of succeeding about that fellow, that is mighty provoking! Who the devil is he talking to? [*Steps aside.*

Enter CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Abs. To what a fine purpose I have been plotting! a noble reward for all my schemes, upon my soul! a little gypsey! I did not think her romance could have made her so damned absurd either. 'Sdeath, I never was in a worse humour in my life! I could cut my own throat, or any other person's, with the greatest pleasure in the world!

Sir Luc. O, faith, I'm in the luck of it! I never could have found him in a sweeter temper for my purpose; to be sure, I'm just come in the nick! now to enter into conversation with him, and so quarrel genteelly.

[*Sir* LUCIUS *goes up to* ABSOLUTE.

With regard to that matter, captain, I must beg leave to differ in opinion with you.

Abs. Upon my word, then you must be a very subtle disputant; because, sir, I happened just then to be giving no opinion at all.

Sir Luc. That's no reason. For, give me leave to tell you, a man may think an untruth as well as speak one.

Abs. Very true, sir; but if a man never utters his thoughts, I should think they might stand a chance of escaping controversy.

Sir Luc. Then, sir, you differ in opinion with me, which amounts to the same thing.

Abs. Hark'e, Sir Lucius; if I had not before known you to be a gentleman, upon my soul, I should not have discovered it at this interview; for what you can drive at, unless you mean to quarrel with me, I cannot conceive!

Sir Luc. I humbly thank you, sir, for the quick-

ness of your appprehension! [*Bowing.*] You have named the very thing I would be at.

Abs. Very well, sir; I shall certainly not baulk your inclinations: but I should be glad you would please to explain your motives.

Sir Luc. Pray, sir, be easy—the quarrel is a very pretty quarrel as it stands—we should only spoil it, by trying to explain it. However, your memory is very short, or you could not have forgot an affront you passed on me within this week. So, no more, but name your time and place.

Abs. Well, sir, since you are so bent on it, the sooner the better—let it be this evening—here by the Spring Gardens. We shall scarcely be interrupted.

Sir Luc. Faith! that same interruption in affairs of this nature shews very great ill breeding. I don't know what's the reason; but in England, if a thing of this kind gets wind, people make such a pother, that a gentleman can never fight in peace and quietness. However, if it's the same to you, captain, I should take it as a particular kindness, if you'd let us meet in King's Mead fields, as a little business will call me there about six o'clock, and I may dispatch both matters at once.

Abs. 'Tis the same to me exactly. A little after six, then, we'll discuss this matter more seriously.

Sir Luc. If you please, sir; there will be very pretty small-sword light, though it won't do for a long shot.—So, that matter's settled, and my mind's at ease. [*Exit Sir* LUCIUS.

Enter FAULKLAND, *meeting* ABSOLUTE.

Abs. Well met! I was going to look for you. O, Faulkland! all the demons of spite and disappointment have conspired against me! I'm so vexed, that if I had not the prospect of a resource in being knocked o' the head by and by, I should scarce have spirit to tell you the cause.

Faulk. What can you mean? Has Lydia changed her mind? I should have thought her duty and inclination would now have pointed to the same object.

Abs. Ay, just as the eyes do of a person who squints: when her love-eye was fixed on me, t'other, her eye of duty, was finely obliqued: but when duty bid her point that the same way, off t'other turned on a swivel, and secured its retreat with a frown!

Faulk. But what's the resource you——

Abs. O, to wind up the whole, a good-natured Irishman here has [*Mimicking Sir* LUCIUS] begged leave to have the pleasure of cutting my throat, and I mean to indulge him; that's all.

Faulk. Pr'ythee, be serious.

Abs. 'Tis fact, upon my soul! Sir Lucius O'-Trigger—you know him by sight—for some affront, which I am sure I never intended, has obliged me to meet him this evening at six o'clock; 'tis on that account I wished to see you; you must go with me.

Faulk. Nay, there must be some mistake, sure. Sir Lucius shall explain himself; and, I dare say, matters may be accommodated: but this evening, did you say? I wish it had been any other time.

Abs. Why? there will be light enough: there will, as Sir Lucius says, be very pretty small-sword light, though it will not do for a long shot. Confound his long shots!

Faulk. But I am myself a good deal ruffled, by a difference I have had with Julia—my vile tormenting temper has made me treat her so cruelly, that I shall not be myself till we are reconciled.

Abs. By Heavens, Faulkland, you don't deserve her!

Enter Servant—gives FAULKLAND *a letter.*

Faulk. O Jack! this is from Julia—I dread to open it—I fear it may be to take a last leave—perhaps to bid me return her letters—and restore ———O! how I suffer for my folly!

Abs. Here—let me see.

[*Takes the letter and opens it.*

Ay, a final sentence indeed! 'tis all over with you, faith.

Faulk. Nay, Jack, don't keep me in suspence.

Abs. Hear then—"As I am convinced that my dear Faulkland's own reflections have already upbraided him for his last unkindness to me, I will not add a word on the subject. I wish to speak with you as soon as possible. Yours ever and truly, Julia."—There's stubbornness and resentment for you! [*Gives him the letter.*

Why, man, you don't seem one whit the happier at this!

Faulk. O, yes, I am—but—but———

Abs. Confound your buts! You never hear any thing that would make another man bless himself, but you immediately damn it with a but.

Faulk. Now, Jack, as you are my friend, own honestly, don't you think there is something forward, something indelicate, in this haste to forgive? Women should never sue for reconciliation; that should always come from us. They should retain their coldness till wooed to kindness; and their pardon, like their love, should "not unsought be won."

Abs. I have not patience to listen to you: thou'rt incorrigible! so say no more on the subject. I must go to settle a few matters—let me see you before six—remember—at my lodgings. A poor, industrious devil like me, who have toiled, and drudged, and plotted to gain my ends, and am at last disappointed by other people's folly, may, in pity, be allowed to swear and grumble a little; but a captious sceptic in love, a slave to fretfulness and whim, who has no difficulties but of his own creating, is a subject more fit for ridicule than compassion! [*Exit.*

Faulk. I feel his reproaches; yet I would not change this too exquisite nicety for the gross content with which he tramples on the thorns of love. His engaging me in this duel has started an idea in my head, which I will instantly pursue. I'll use it as the touchstone of Julia's sincerity and disinterestedness—if her love prove pure and sterling ore, my name will rest on it with honour! and once I have stamped it there,

I lay aside my doubts for ever: but if the dross of selfishness, the allay of pride, predominate, 'twill be best to leave her as a toy for some less cautious fool to sigh for. [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—JULIA'S *Dressing-Room.*

JULIA *alone.*

Julia. How this message has alarmed me! what dreadful accident can he mean? why such charges to be alone?—O Faulkland, how many unhappy moments, how many tears have you cost me!

Enter FAULKLAND.

What means this? why this caution, Faulkland?

Faulk. Alas! Julia, I come to take a long farewell.

Julia. Heavens! what do you mean?

Faulk. You see before you a wretch, whose life is forfeited. Nay, start not! the infirmity of my temper has drawn all this misery on me. I left you fretful and passionate—an untoward accident drew me into a quarrel; the event is, that I must fly this kingdom instantly. O Julia! had I been so fortunate as to have called you mine entirely, before this mischance had fallen on me, I should not so deeply dread my banishment!

Julia. My soul is oppressed with sorrow at the nature of your misfortune: had these adverse circumstances arisen from a less fatal cause, I should have felt strong comfort in the thought that I could now chase from your bosom every doubt of the warm sincerity of my love. My heart has long known no other guardian—I now intrust my person to your honour—we will fly together. When safe from pursuit, my father's will may be fulfilled, and I receive a legal claim to be the partner of your sorrows, and tenderest comforter. Then, on the bosom of your wedded Julia, you may lull your keen regret to slumbering; while virtuous love, with a cherub's hand, shall smooth the brow of upbraiding thought, and pluck the thorn from compunction.

Faulk. O Julia! I am bankrupt in gratitude! but the time is so pressing, it calls on you for so hasty a resolution! Would you not wish some hours to weigh the advantages you forego, and what little compensation poor Faulkland can make you beside his solitary love?

Julia. I ask not a moment. No, Faulkland, I have loved you for yourself; and if I now, more than ever, prize the solemn engagement which so long has pledged us to each other, it is because it leaves no room for hard aspersions on my fame, and puts the seal of duty to an act of love. But let us not linger. Perhaps this delay——

Faulk. 'Twill be better I should not venture out again till dark. Yet am I grieved to think what numberless distresses will press heavy on your gentle disposition!

Julia. Perhaps your fortune may be forfeited by this unhappy act. I know not whether 'tis so, but sure that alone can never make us unhappy. The little I have will be sufficient to support us; and exile never should be splendid.

Faulk. Ay, but in such an abject state of life, my wounded pride, perhaps, may increase the natural fretfulness of my temper, till I become a rude, morose companion, beyond your patience to endure. Perhaps the recollection of a deed my conscience cannot justify, may haunt me in such gloomy and unsocial fits, that I shall hate the tenderness that would relieve me, break from your arms, and quarrel with your fondness!

Julia. If your thoughts should assume so unhappy a bent, you will the more want some mild and affectionate spirit to watch over and console you; one, who, by bearing your infirmities with gentleness and resignation, may teach you so to bear the evils of your fortune.

Faulk. Julia, I have proved you to the quick! and, with this useless device, I throw away all my doubts. How shall I plead to be forgiven this last unworthy effect of my restless, unsatisfied disposition?

Julia. Has no such disaster happened, as you related?

Faulk. I am ashamed to own that it was pretended; yet, in pity, Julia, do not kill me with resenting a fault which never can be repeated; but sealing, this once, my pardon, let me to-morrow, in the face of Heaven, receive my future guide and monitress, and expiate my past folly, by years of tender adoration.

Julia. Hold, Faulkland!—that you are free from a crime, which I before feared to name, Heaven knows how sincerely I rejoice! These are tears of thankfulness for that! But that your cruel doubts should have urged you to an imposition that has wrung my heart, gives me now a pang more keen than I can express!

Faulk. By Heavens, Julia——

Julia. Yet hear me.——My father loved you, Faulkland, and you preserved the life that tender parent gave me; in his presence I pledged my hand, joyfully pledged it, where before I had given my heart. When, soon after, I lost that parent, it seemed to me that Providence had, in Faulkland, shewn me whither to transfer, without a pause, my grateful duty, as well as my affection: hence, I have been content to bear from you, what pride and delicacy would have forbid me from another. I will not upbraid you, by repeating how you have trifled with my sincerity.——

Faulk. I confess it all! yet hear——

Julia. After such a year of trial, I might have flattered myself that I should not have been insulted with a new probation of my sincerity, as cruel as unnecessary! I now see it is not in your nature to be content, or confident in love. With this conviction, I never will be yours. While I had hopes that my persevering attention, and unreproaching kindness, might, in time, reform your temper, I should have been happy to have gained a dearer influence over you; but I will not furnish you with a licenced power to keep alive an incorrigible fault, at the expence of one who never would contend with you.

Faulk. Nay, but Julia, by my soul and honour, if, after this——

Julia. But one word more. As my faith has once been given to you, I never will barter it with another. I shall pray for your happiness with the truest sincerity; and the dearest blessing I can ask of Heaven to send you, will be, to charm you from that unhappy temper, which alone has prevented the performance of our solemn engagement. All I request of you is, that you will yourself reflect upon this infirmity; and when you number up the many true delights it has deprived you of, let it not be your least regret, that it lost you the love of one—who would have followed you in beggary though the world. [*Exit.*

Faulk. She's gone for ever! There was an awful resolution in her manner, that rivetted me to my place. O fool! dolt! barbarian! Curst as I am, with more imperfections than my fellow-wretches, kind fortune sent a heaven-gifted cherub to my aid, and, like a ruffian, I have driven her from my side! I must now haste to my appointment. Well! my mind is tuned for such a scene. I shall wish only to become a principal in it, and reverse the tale my cursed folly put me upon forging here. O Love! tormentor! fiend! Whose influence, like the moon's, acting on men of dull souls, makes idiots of them; but, meeting subtler spirits, betrays their course, and urges sensibility to madness! [*Exit* FAULK.

Enter Maid and LYDIA.

Maid. My mistress, madam, I know, was here just now; perhaps she is only in the next room. [*Exit Maid.*

Lydia. Heigh ho! Though he has used me so, this fellow runs strangely in my head. I believe one lecture from my grave cousin will make me recal him.

Enter JULIA.

O, Julia, I am come to you with such an appetite for consolation! Lud! Child, what's the matter with you? You have been crying! I'll be hanged, if that Faulkland has not been tormenting you!

Julia. You mistake the cause of my uneasiness. Something has flurried me a little. Nothing that you can guess at. I would not accuse Faulkland to a sister. [*Aside.*

Lydia. Ah! whatever vexations you may have, I can assure you mine surpass them. You know who Beverley proves to be?

Julia. I will now own to you, Lydia, that Mr Faulkland had before informed me of the whole affair. Had young Absolute been the person you took him for, I should not have accepted your confidence on the subject, without a serious endeavour to counteract your caprice.

Lydia. So, then, I see I have been deceived by every one! But I don't care; I'll never have him.

Julia. Nay, Lydia——

Lydia. Why, is it not provoking? When I thought we were coming to the prettiest distress imaginable, to find myself made a mere Smithfield bargain of at last! There, had I projected one of the most sentimental elopements! So becoming a disguise! So amiable a ladder of ropes! Conscious moon—four horses—Scotch parson—with such surprise to Mrs Malaprop—and such paragraphs in the newspapers! O, I shall die with disappointment!

Julia. I don't wonder at it!

Lydia. Now—sad reverse! What have I to expect, but, after a deal of flimsy preparation with a bishop's licence, and my aunt's blessing, to go simpering up to the altar; or, perhaps, be cried three times in a country church, and have an unmannerly fat clerk ask the consent of every butcher in the parish to join John Absolute and Lydia Languish, spinster! O, that I should live to hear myself called spinster!

Julia. Melancholy, indeed!

Lydia. How mortifying to remember the dear delicious shifts I used to be put to, to gain half a minute's conversation with this fellow! How often have I stole forth, in the coldest night in January, and found him in the garden stuck like a dripping statue! There would he kneel to me in the snow, and sneeze and cough so pathetically! He shivering with cold, and I with apprehension! And, while the freezing blast numbed our joints, how warmly would he press me to pity his flame, and glow with mutual ardour! Ah, Julia, that was something like being in love!

Julia. If I were in spirits, Lydia, I should chide you only by laughing heartily at you; but it suits more the situation of my mind, at present, earnestly to entreat you, not to let a man, who loves you with sincerity, suffer that unhappiness from your caprice, which I know too well caprice can inflict.

Lydia. O lud! What has brought my aunt here?

Enter Mrs MALAPROP, FAG, *and* DAVID.

Mrs Mal. So, so! here's fine work! Here's fine suicide, parricide, and simulation going on in the fields! And Sir Anthony not to be found to prevent the antistrophe!

Julia. For Heaven's sake, madam, what's the meaning of this?

Mrs Mal. That gentleman can tell you: 'twas he enveloped the affair.

Lydia. Do, sir; will you inform us? [*To* FAG.

Fag. Madam, I should hold myself very deficient in every requisite that forms the man of breeding, if I delayed a moment to give all the information in my power to a lady so deeply interested in the affair as you are.

Lydia. But quick! Quick, sir!

Fag. True, madam, as you say, one should be quick in divulging matters of this nature; for should we be tedious, perhaps, while we are flourishing on the subject, two or three lives may be lost!

Lydia. O patience! Do, madam, for Heaven's sake, tell us what's the matter.

Mrs Mal. Why, murder's the matter! Slaughter's the matter! Killing's the matter! But he can tell you the perpendiculars.

Lydia. Then pr'ythee, sir, be brief.

Fag. Why then, madam, as to murder, I cannot take upon me to say; and as to slaughter, or manslaughter, that will be as the jury finds it.

Lydia. But who, sir———who are engaged in this?

Fag. Faith, madam, one is a young gentleman whom I should be very sorry any thing was to happen to—a very pretty-behaved gentleman! We have lived much together, and always on terms.

Lydia. But who is this? Who, who, who?

Fag. My master, madam—my master—I speak of my master.

Lydia. Heavens! What, Captain Absolute?

Mrs Mal. O, to be sure you are frightened now!

Julia. But who are with him, sir?

Fag. As to the rest, madam, this gentleman can inform you better than I.

Julia. Do speak, friend. [*To* DAVID.

David. Look'ee, my lady———by the mass, there's mischief going on! Folks don't use to meet for amusement with fire-arms, fire-locks, fire-engines, fire-screens, fire-office, and the devil knows what other crackers beside! This, my lady, I say, has an angry savour.

Julia. But who is there beside Captain Absolute, friend?

David. My poor master—under favour, for mentioning him first. You know me, my lady—I am David—and my master of course is, or was, 'Squire Acres. Then comes 'Squire Faulkland.

Julia. Do, madam; let us instantly endeavour to prevent mischief!

Mrs Mal. O fie! it would be very inelegant in us: we should only participate things.

David. Ah! Do, Mrs Aunt, save a few lives; they are desperately given, believe me. Above all, there is that blood-thirsty Philistine, Sir Lucius O'Trigger.

Mrs Mal. Sir Lucius O'Trigger! O mercy! Have they drawn poor little dear Sir Lucius into the scrape? Why, how you stand, girl! You have no more feeling than one of the Derbyshire putrifactions!

Lydia. What are we to do, madam?

Mrs Mal. Why, fly with the utmost felicity, to be sure, to prevent mischief! Here, friend—you can shew us the place?

Fag. If you please, madam, I will conduct you. David, do you look for Sir Anthony.

[*Exit* DAVID.

Mrs Mal. Come, girls; this gentleman will exhort us. Come, sir, you're our envoy; lead the way, and we'll precede.

Fag. Not a step before the ladies, for the world!

Mrs Mal. You're sure you know the spot?

Fag. I think I can find it, madam; and one good thing is, we shall hear the report of the pistols, as we draw near, so we cann't well miss them; never fear, madam, never fear.

[*Exit, he talking.*

SCENE II.—*South Parade.*

Enter ABSOLUTE, *putting his sword under his great coat.*

Abs. A sword seen in the streets of Bath would raise as great an alarm as a mad dog. How provoking this is in Faulkland! Never punctual! I shall be obliged to go without him at last. O, the devil! Here's Sir Anthony! How shall I escape him?

[*Muffles up his face, and takes a circle to go off.*

Enter Sir ANTHONY.

Sir Anth. How one may be deceived at a little distance! Only that I see he don't know me, I could have sworn that was Jack! Hey! Gad's life! It is. Why, Jack, what are you afraid of? Hey! Sure I'm right. Why, Jack—Jack Absolute! [*Goes up to him.*

Abs. Really, sir, you have the advantage of me: I don't remember ever to have had the honour—my name is Saunderson, at your service.

Sir Anth. Sir, I beg your pardon—I took you—Hey? Why, zounds! It is—Stay——

[*Looks up to his face.*

So, so! your humble servant, Mr Saunderson! Why, you scoundrel, what tricks are you after now?

Abs. O! A joke, sir, a joke! I came here on purpose to look for you, sir.

Sir Anth. You did! Well, I am glad you were so lucky; but what are you muffled up so for? What's this for? Hey?

Abs. 'Tis cool, sir, isn't it? Rather chilly, somehow: but I shall be late—I have a particular engagement.

Sir Anth. Stay. Why, I thought you were looking for me. Pray, Jack, where is't you are going?

Abs. Going, sir!

Sir Anth. Ay; where are you going?

Abs. Where am I going?

Sir Anth. You unmannerly puppy!

Abs. I was going, sir, to—to—to—to Lydia—sir, to Lydia——to make matters up, if I could; and I was looking for you, sir, to—to——

Sir Anth. To go with you, I suppose? Well, come along.

Abs. O, zounds! no, sir, not for the world! I wished to meet with you, sir, to—to—to—You find it cool, I'm sure, sir—you'd better not stay out.

Sir Anth. Cool! not at all. Well, Jack, and what will you say to Lydia?

Abs. O, sir, beg her pardon, humour her; promise and vow——But I detain you, sir—consider the cold air on your gout!

Sir Anth. O, not at all, not at all—I'm in no hurry. Ah! Jack, you youngsters, when once you are wounded here! [*Putting his hand to* ABSOLUTE'S *breast.*] Hey! what the deuce have you got here?

Abs. Nothing, sir, nothing!

Sir Anth. What's this?——here's something damned hard!

Abs. O, trinkets, sir, trinkets! a bauble for Lydia!

Sir Anth. Nay, let me see your taste. [*Pulls his coat open, the sword falls.*] Trinkets! a bauble for Lydia!—Zounds, sirrah, you are not going to cut her throat, are you?

Abs. Ha, ha, ha! I thought it would divert you, sir, though I did not mean to tell you till afterwards.

Sir Anth. You did not?—Yes, this is a very diverting trinket, truly!

Abs. Sir, I'll explain to you. You know, sir, Lydia is romantic—devilish romantic, and very absurd, of course:——now, sir, I intend, if she refuses to forgive me, to sheath this sword—and swear, I'll fall upon its point, and expire at her feet!

Sir Anth. Fall upon a fiddle-stick's end! Why, I suppose it is the very thing that would please her—Get along, you fool!

Abs. Well, sir, you shall hear of my success—you shall hear.——O, Lydia! forgive me, or this pointed steel, says I!

Sir Anth. O, booby! stab away, and welcome, says she.—Get along! and damn your trinkets!

[*Exit* ABSOLUTE.

Enter DAVID, *running.*

David. Stop him! Stop him! Murder! Thief! Fire! Stop fire! stop fire!—O, Sir Anthony!—call, call! Bid him stop! Murder! Fire!

Sir Anth. Fire! Murder! where?

David. Oons! he's out of sight! and I'm out of breath, for my part! O, Sir Anthony, why didn't you stop him? why did'nt you stop him?

Sir Anth. Zounds! the fellow's mad! Stop whom? stop Jack?

David. Ay, the captain, sir!—there's murder and slaughter!

Sir Anth. Murder!

David. Ay, please you, Sir Anthony, there's all kinds of murder, all sorts of slaughter, to be seen in the fields! There's fighting going on, sir—bloody sword and gun fighting!

Sir Anth. Who are going to fight, dunce?

David. Every body that I know of, Sir Anthony! every body is going to fight my poor master: Sir Lucius O'Trigger, your son, the captain!

Sir Anth. O, the dog! I see his tricks——Do you know the place?

David. King's Mead-fields.

Sir Anth. You know the way?

David. Not an inch; but I'll call the mayor, aldermen, constables, church-wardens, and beadles—we cann't be too many to part them!

Sir Anth. Come along; give me your shoulder—we'll get assistance as we go—The lying villain! Well, I shall be in such a frenzy!—So this was the history of his trinkets! I'll bauble him! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*King's Mead-fields.*

Sir LUCIUS *and* ACRES, *with pistols.*

Acres. By my valour, then, Sir Lucius, forty yards is a good distance!—Odds levels and aims! I say it is a good distance.

Sir Luc. Is it for muskets or small field-pieces? Upon my conscience, Mr Acres, you must leave those things to me. Stay, now, I'll show you: [*Measures paces along the stage.*] There, now, that is a very pretty distance—a pretty gentleman's distance.

Acres. Zounds! we might as well fight in a sentry-box! I tell you, Sir Lucius, the farther he is off, the cooler I shall take my aim.

Sir Luc. Faith! then I suppose you would aim at him best of all, if he was out of sight!

Acres. No, Sir Lucius: but I should think forty, or eight-and-thirty yards——

Sir Luc. Pho, pho! nonsense! three or four feet between the mouths of your pistols is as good as a mile!

Acres. Odds bullets, no! By my valour, there is no merit in killing him so near! Do, my dear Sir Lucius, let me bring him down at a long shot—a long shot, Sir Lucius, if you love me!

Sir Luc. Well, the gentleman's friend and I must settle that. But tell me, now, Mr Acres, in case of an accident, is there any little will or commission I could execute for you?

Acres. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius; but I don't understand——

Sir Luc. Why, you may think there's no being shot at without a little risk; and, if an unlucky bullet should carry a quietus with it—I say, it will be no time then to be bothering you about family matters.

Acres. A quietus!

Sir Luc. For instance, now—if that should be the case, would you choose to be pickled and sent home? or would it be the same to you to lie here in the Abbey?—I'm told there is very snug lying in the Abbey.

Acres. Pickled!—Snug lying in the Abbey!—Odds tremors! Sir Lucius, don't talk so!

Sir Luc. I suppose, Mr Acres, you never were engaged in an affair of this kind before?

Acres. No, Sir Lucius, never before.

Sir Luc. Ah, that's a pity! there's nothing

like being used to a thing——Pray, now, how would you receive the gentleman's shot?

Acres. Odds files! I've practised that—There, Sir Lucius, there—[*Puts himself in an attitude*]—a side front, hey?——Odd! I'll make myself small enough—I'll stand edge-ways.

Sir Luc. Now, you're quite out; for if you stand so when I take my aim—[*Levelling at him.*]

Acres. Zounds! Sir Lucius—are you sure it is not cocked?

Sir Luc. Never fear.

Acres. But—but—you don't know—it may go off of its own head!

Sir Luc. Pho! be easy—Well, now, if I hit you in the body, my bullet has a double chance—for if it misses a vital part of your right side, 'twill be very hard if it don't succeed on the left!

Acres. A vital part!

Sir Luc. But there—fix yourself so—[*Placing him*]—let him see the broad-side of your full front—there—now, a ball or two may pass clean through your body, and never do any harm at all!

Acres. Clean through me!—a ball or two clean through me!

Sir Luc. Ay may they—and it is much the genteelest attitude into the bargain.

Acres. Look'ee! Sir Lucius——I'd just as lieve be shot in an awkward posture as a genteel one—So, by my valour! I will stand edge-ways.

Sir Luc. [*Looking at his watch.*] Sure they don't mean to disappoint us—Hah!—no faith—I think I see them coming!

Acres. Hey!—what!—coming!

Sir Luc. Ay—Who are those yonder getting over the stile?

Acres. There are two of them, indeed!——Well, let them come—hey, Sir Lucius?—we—we—we—we—won't run.

Sir Luc. Run!

Acres. No—I say—we won't run, by my valour!

Sir Luc. What the devil's the matter with you?

Acres. Nothing—nothing—my dear friend—my dear Sir Lucius—but I—I—I don't feel quite so bold, somehow—as I did.

Sir Luc. O fie! consider your honour.

Acres. Ay—true—my honour!—Do, Sir Lucius, edge in a word or two, every now and then, about my honour.

Sir Luc. Well, here they're coming. [*Looking.*

Acres. Sir Lucius—if I was not with you, I should almost think I was afraid—if my valour should leave me!—Valour will come and go.

Sir Luc. Then, pray keep it fast, while you have it.

Acres. Sir Lucius, I doubt it is going—yes—my valour is certainly going!—it is sneaking off! I feel it oozing out, as it were, at the palms of my hands!

Sir Luc. Your honour—your honour!—Here they are!

Acres. O mercy!——Now that I was safe at Clod-Hall! or could be shot before I was aware!

Enter FAULKLAND *and* ABSOLUTE.

Sir Luc. Gentlemen, your most obedient.——Ha! what, Captain Absolute!—So, I suppose, sir, you are come here just like myself—to do a kind office, first for your friend, then to proceed to business on your own account?

Acres. What, Jack!—my dear Jack!—my dear friend!

Abs. Hark'e, Bob, Beverley's at hand.

Sir Luc. Well, Mr Acres, I don't blame your saluting the gentleman civilly.—So, Mr Beverley, [*To* FAULKLAND,] if you'll choose weapons, the captain and I will measure the ground.

Faulk. My weapons, sir!

Acres. Odds life! Sir Lucius, I'm not going to fight Mr Faulkland—These are my particular friends.

Sir Luc. What, sir, did not you come here to fight Mr Acres?

Faulk. Not I, upon my word, sir!

Sir Luc. Well, now, that's mighty provoking! But I hope, Mr Faulkland, as there are three of us come on purpose for the game, you won't be so cantanckerous as to spoil the party by sitting out?

Abs. O pray, Faulkland, fight, to oblige Sir Lucius.

Faulk. Nay, if Mr Acres is so bent on the matter——

Acres. No, no, Mr Faulkland—I'll bear my disappointment like a Christian. Look'ee, Sir Lucius, there's no occasion at all for me to fight; and, if it is the same to you, I'd as lieve let it alone.

Sir Luc. Observe me, Mr Acres, I must not be trifled with. You have certainly challenged somebody—and you came here to fight him—Now, if that gentleman is willing to represent him, I can't see, for my soul, why it is not just the same thing.

Acres. Why, no——Sir Lucius——I tell you 'tis one Beverley I've challenged—a fellow, you see, that dare not shew his face! if he were here, I'd make him give up his pretensions directly!

Abs. Hold, Bob—let me set you right.—There is no such man as Beverley in the case. The person who assumed that name is before you; and, as his pretensions are the same in both characters, he is ready to support them in whatever way you please.

Sir Luc. Well, this is lucky.—Now you have an opportunity——

Acres. What! quarrel with my dear friend Jack Absolute—not if he were fifty Beverley's! Zounds! Sir Lucius, you would not have me so unnatural.

Sir Luc. Upon my conscience, Mr Acres, your valour has oozed away with a vengeance!

Acres. Not in the least! Odds backs and abettors! I'll be your second with all my heart—and if you should get a quietus, you may command me entirely. I'll get you snug lying in the Abbey here;

or pickle you, and send you over to Blunderbuss-hall, or any thing of the kind, with the greatest pleasure.

Sir Luc. Pho, pho ! you are little better than a coward.

Acres. Mind, gentlemen, he calls me a coward ! Coward was the word, by my valour !

Sir Luc. Well, sir ?

Acres. Look'ee, Sir Lucius, 'tis not that I mind the word coward—coward may be said in joke—But if you had called me a poltroon, odds daggers and balls——

Sir Luc. Well, sir ?

Acres. I should have thought you a very ill bred man.

Sir Luc. Pho ! you are beneath my notice.

Abs. Nay, Sir Lucius, you can't have a better second than my friend Acres—He is a most determined dog—called in the country, Fighting Bob.—He generally kills a man a-week ! Don't you, Bob ?

Acres. Ay; at home !

Sir Luc. Well, then, captain, 'tis we must begin—so come out, my little counsellor, [*Draws his sword,*] and ask the gentleman, whether he will resign the lady, without forcing you to proceed against him ?

Abs. Come on, then, sir: [*Draws:*] since you won't let it be an amicable suit, here's my reply !

Enter Sir ANTHONY, DAVID, *and the Women.*

David. Knock them all down, sweet Sir Anthony—knock down my master in particular—and bind his hands over to their good behaviour !

Sir Anth. Put up, Jack, put up, or I shall be in a phrenzy.—How came you in a duel, sir ?

Abs. Faith, sir, that gentleman can tell you better than I ! 'twas he called on me ; and you know, sir, I serve his majesty.

Sir Anth. Here's a pretty fellow ! I catch him going to cut a man's throat, and he tells me, he serves his majesty !—Zounds ! sirrah, then how durst you draw the king's sword against one of his subjects ?

Abs. Sir, I tell you, that gentleman called me out, without explaining his reasons.

Sir Anth. Gad, sir ! how came you to call my son out, without explaining your reasons ?

Sir Luc. Your son, sir, insulted me in a manner which my honour could not brook.

Sir Anth. Zounds ! Jack, how durst you insult the gentleman in a manner which his honour could not brook ?

Mrs Mal. Come, come, let's have no honour before ladies: Captain Absolute, come here—How could you intimidate us so ? Here's Lydia has been terrified to death for you.

Abs. For fear I should be killed, or escape, madam ?

Mrs Mal. Nay, no delusions to the past—Lydia is convinced. Speak, child.

Sir Luc. With your leave, madam, I must put in a word here ; I believe I could interpret the young lady's silence—Now mark—

Lydia. What is it you mean, sir ?

Sir Luc. Come, come, Delia, we must be serious now ; this is no time for trifling.

Lydia. 'Tis true, sir; and your reproof bids me offer this gentleman my hand, and solicit the return of his affections.

Abs. O ! my little angel, say you so ?—Sir Lucius, I perceive there must be some mistake here—with regard to the affront which you affirm I have given you, I can only say, that it could not have been intentional.—And as you must be convinced that I should not fear to support a real injury—you shall now see that I am not ashamed to atone for an inadvertency—I ask your pardon.—But for this lady, while honoured with her approbation, I will support my claim against any man whatever.

Sir Anth. Well said, Jack, and I'll stand by you, my boy !

Acres. Mind, I give up all my claim—I make no pretensions to any thing in the world—and if I can't get a wife without fighting for her, by my valour, I'll live a bachelor.

Sir Luc. Captain, give me your hand——an affront handsomely acknowledged becomes an obligation—and as for the lady—if she chooses to deny her own hand-writing here——

[*Takes out letters.*

Mrs Mal. O, he will dissolve my mystery !—Sir Lucius, perhaps there's some mistake—perhaps I can illuminate——

Sir Luc. Pray, old gentlewoman, don't interfere where you have no business.—Miss Languish, are you my Delia, or not?

Lydia. Indeed, Sir Lucius, I am not.

[LYDIA *and* ABSOLUTE *walk aside.*

Mrs Mal. Sir Lucius O'Trigger—ungrateful as you are—I own the soft impeachment—pardon my blushes—I am Delia !

Sir Luc. You Delia—pho ! pho ! be easy !

Mrs Mal. Why, thou barbarous Vandyke—those letters are mine—When you are more sensible of my benignity—perhaps I may be brought to encourage your addresses.

Sir Luc. Mrs Malaprop, I am extremely sensible of your condescension; and whether you or Lucy have put this trick upon me, I am equally beholden to you.—And to shew you I am not ungrateful, Captain Absolute, since you have taken that lady from me, I'll give you my Delia into the bargain.

Abs. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius; but here's my friend, Fighting Bob, unprovided for.

Sir Luc. Hah ! little Valour—here, will you make your fortune ?

Acres. Odds wrinkles ! No.—But give me your hand, Sir Lucius; forget and forgive; but if ever I give you a chance of pickling me again, say Bob Acres is a dunce, that's all.

Sir Anth. Come, Mrs Malaprop, don't be cast down—you are in your bloom yet.

Mrs Mal. O, Sir Anthony !—men are all barbarians———

[*All retire but* JULIA *and* FAULKLAND.

Julia. He seems dejected and unhappy—not

sullen—there was some foundation, however, for the tale he told me—O woman! how true should be your judgment, when your resolution is so weak!

Faulk. Julia!—how can I sue for what I so little deserve? I dare not presume—yet Hope is the child of Penitence.

Julia. Oh! Faulkland, you have not been more faulty in your unkind treatment of me, than I am now in wanting inclination to resent it. As my heart honestly bids me place my weakness to the account of love, I should be ungenerous not to admit the same plea for yours.

Faulk. Now I shall be blest indeed!———— [*Sir* ANTHONY *comes forward.*

Sir Anth. What's going on here?—So you have been quarrelling too, I warrant.——Come, Julia, I never interfered before; but let me have a hand in the matter at last.——All the faults I have ever seen in my friend Faulkland, seemed to proceed from what he calls the delicacy and warmth of his affection for you——There, marry him directly, Julia; you'll find he'll mend surprisingly! [*The rest come forward.*

Sir Luc. Come now, I hope there is no dissatisfied person, but what is content; for as I have been disappointed myself, it will be very hard if I have not the satisfaction of seeing other people succeed better——

Acres. You are right, Sir Lucius.—So, Jack, I wish you joy—Mr Faulkland the same.—Ladies, —come now, to shew you I'm neither vexed nor angry, odds tabors and pipes! I'll order the fiddles in half an hour to the New Rooms—— and I insist on your all meeting them there.

Sir Anth. Gad, sir! I like your spirit; and at night we single lads will drink a health to the young couples, and a husband to Mrs Malaprop.

Faulk. Our partners are stolen from us, Jack —I hope to be congratulated by each other— yours for having checked in time the errors of an ill-directed imagination, which might have betrayed an innocent heart; and mine, for having, by her gentleness and candour, reformed the unhappy temper of one, who, by it, made wretched whom he loved most, and tortured the heart he ought to have adored.

Abs. Well, Jack, we have both tasted the bitters, as well as the sweets of love—with this difference only, that you always prepared the bitter cup for yourself, while I———

Lydia. Was always obliged to me for it! hey, Mr Modesty?—But come, no more of that—our happiness is now as unallayed as general.

Julia. Then let us study to preserve it so; and while Hope pictures to us a flattering scene of future bliss, let us deny its pencil those colours which are too bright to be lasting.—When hearts deserving happiness would unite their fortunes, Virtue would crown them with an unfading garland of modest hurtless flowers; but ill-judging Passion will force the gaudier rose into the wreath, whose thorn offends them, when its leaves are dropt! [*Exeunt omnes.*

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.

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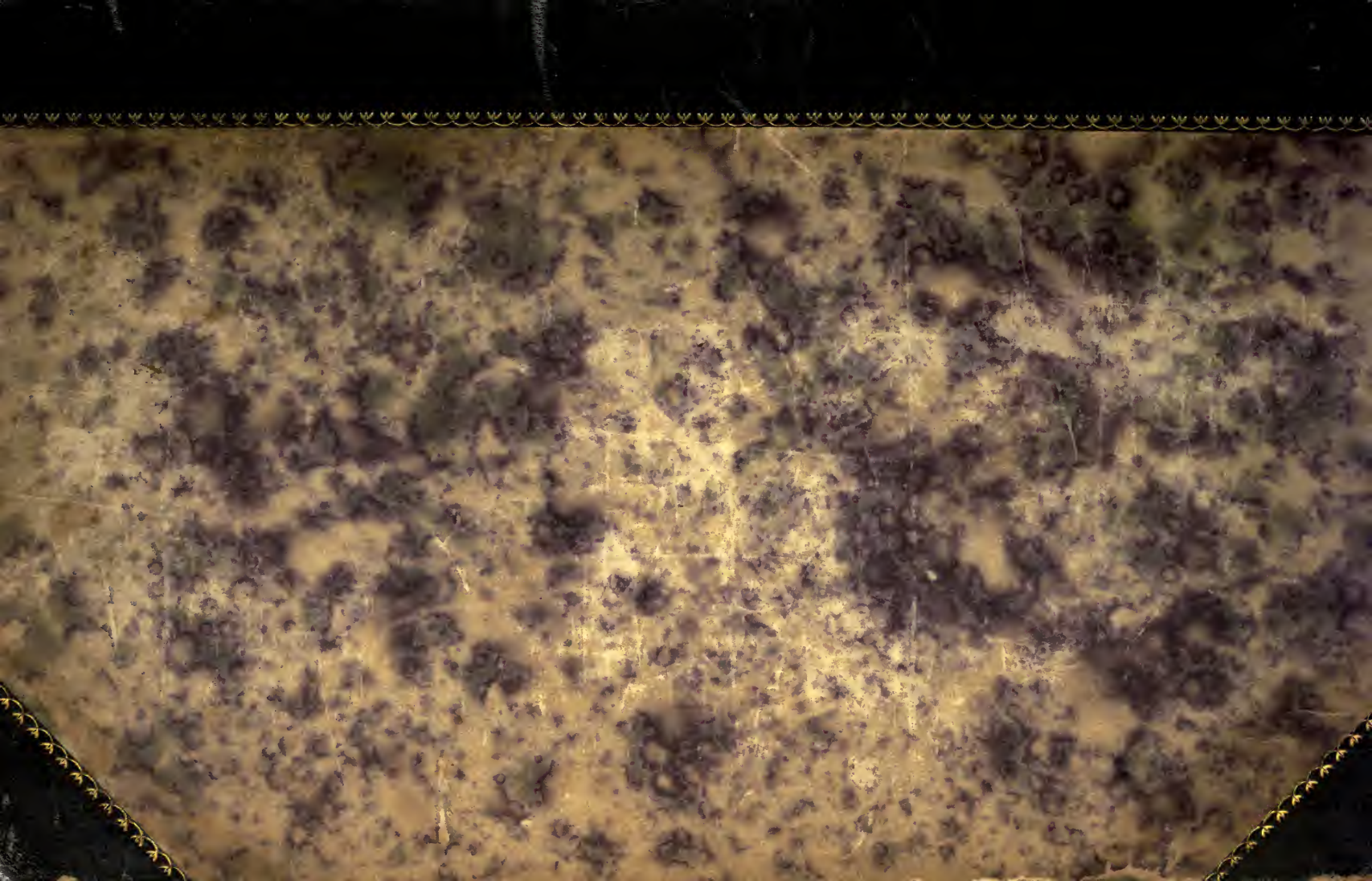
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